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— Sermons —

ETERNAL LIFE.

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And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.—
MATT. xxv., 46.

It might be an interesting question to discuss what is the soul's experience the instant after death. Who has not stood beside some dying one and wondered: "How is it with him in the valley?" and when the last breath is drawn and the heart is silent, "How is it now with the soul? What faces does he see? Among what scenes does he move? With what sensations is he thrilled? Where is he and what does he this moment?" It is a thought which fills the stoutest heart with awe, and baffles the keenest brain with its mystery. No man has returned from that other world to tell us. Lazarus did not explain how it was with him those four days. Human spirits do not reveal themselves to vulgar, gaping crowds whose irreverent inquisitiveness moves them to pay a moderate fee in order to communicate with the unseen world. The problem must be solved by every one alone. When you and I cross the border land we shall know, and not before. Of one thing, however, we are assured, and the righteous man need ask no more: Christian spirits are at rest. For the comfort of all believers in every age John was commanded to write: "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord immediately. Yea,

saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors and their works do follow them."

There is then a state of happiness which spirits or souls of just men enter into at once after the separation from the body. What the character of that state is we may not know. It is enough that they are happy. The penitent robber was with the Lord in Paradise. Lazarus was sheltered in Abraham's bosom. Paul would depart to be with Christ or travel out of the body that he might be present or reside with the Lord. Moses and Elijah were in conscious and happy communion with each other and with Christ though centuries had come and gone since they passed into the unseen world. But after the resurrection of the body or the resurrection of life and the judgment of all men the invitation is given, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Then our Lord tells us, "The righteous shall go away into life eternal." This is the final state of the saints in Heaven.

What is meant now in the Scriptures by life eternal? It will help us to keep in mind these things. We are journeying onward. We are going to-day the way of all the earth. We are nearing, many of us, our end. We should never open our eyes to the morning light or close them at even-time without thinking of ourselves as one day nearer our eternal destiny. And so, thoughtful and serious as the vision of an endless life passes before us, we shall be diligent to have ourselves in readiness for our change.

Take first then a thought of this state of happiness itself. That good men shall enjoy a condition of blessedness in the world to come is clearly revealed, for "Godliness has the promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." In some respects from the light of reason and of nature this appears. We may not determine the kind of happiness from these sources, yet some general idea of future felicity may be thus learned. A general notion of happiness after death is found among the wiser heathen peoples. They had only the guidance of the light of nature. Yet they tell us of Elysian Plains, Fortunate Fields, and Isles of the Blessed as the seat of the pious after death. "He who has lived all his life in justice and holiness," says Socrates, "shall go when he dies to the islands of the blest and dwell there in perfect happiness out of the reach of evil." Rhadamanthus, Æacus, and Minos are to judge where three ways meet and out of which two roads lead, one to the Islands of the Blessed and the other to Tartarus. It was a sensuous paradise that awaited the pious. It was described with a carnal beauty and richness. Grassy plains and flowering meadows; a restored Eden filled with the delights of sense, streams of milk and honey, trees laden with all manner of luscious fruits, fields clothed with roses and lilies, temperate climate free from winter's storms and summer's heats, wildest extravagancies born of sensual desire, expressed to their minds the idea of the future state. Yet with all its fanciful bearings the current impression among heathen nations that beyond the grave for such as merited it there was a higher state of joy is an argument for its existence. And when we consider the vagaries of what is called eschatology, or the doctrine of last

things, among Christian people in every age, it is not strange that these, taught only by nature and reason, should be bewildered. Bible-reading men and women have zealously discussed for centuries such questions as those of the old theologians—whether souls are conducted to heaven or to hell immediately after death; whether the *limbus* of hell is the same as Abraham's bosom; whether the *limbus puerorum* is the same as the *limbus patrum*; whether the sun and the moon will really be obscured in the day of judgment; whether the fire which is to consume the world will be like in kind to elemental fire; whether the members of the human body will rise with it; whether the hair and the nails will reappear in the new body; and so on to endless idle questioning concerning age, size and sex. The untaught mind had one thought—clear, fixed, and general—happiness in some way after death was possible to men.

Then the natural, universal desire in mankind after happiness indicates the truth of this condition. It is certain this is not attained in the present life, though sought after with ever so much eagerness in every way. Have you ever found it? Have you ever found the man or woman who has found it and is satisfied? Men have sought for it in wealth, in natural wisdom, in worldly honors, in the gratification of sensual appetites, in travel up and down the face of the earth, but have any found it to their satisfaction? Have any secured the durable possession of perfect good without any mixture of evil, the enjoyment of pure pleasure unalloyed with pain? Is happiness anything more than a name on earth? When we call a man happy do we mean anything more than that he is happier than some others with whom we compare him—than the general condition of men, or than he himself would be under a different situation? Happiness does not consist in pleasures of sense or imagination, in eating, drinking, music, painting, or theatrical exhibitions, for these continue but a little while, by repetition lose their relish and because of high expectation often bring disappointment. Happiness is not exemption from care, labor, or business; such a state is attended with depression of spirits, imaginary anxieties, and the whole train of hypochondriacal affections. Happiness is not found in greatness, rank, or elevated station, as one may see from abundant testimony any day in this magnificent city. There is proportionately more happiness in any inland village of five hundred people. What then? Happiness consists in the exercise of the dispositions and the enjoyment of the blessings indicated in the Gospel of Christ. Happiness is found only in God as the chief good, and that not in perfection in this life. It is beyond. We grow toward it. And what means this universal longing? Is it planted in vain? Is it not most reasonable to believe there is a future state where this want shall be satisfied, and the virtuous at least shall realize a fulness of joy?

Again, from the unequal distribution of things in the present state, which makes the providence of God often very intricate and which cannot be understood without admitting a future state, reason prompts this belief. Wicked men are often exalted and righteous souls afflicted here. Vice and immor-

ality pass a life-time of temporal enjoyment and happiness, while virtue is derided and justice and truth receive no recognition. Is it not reasonable to suppose that those who have suffered in the cause of virtue shall some time be rewarded? Is it possible to understand that the government of the universe is wise and harmonious without some such evening up of matters in a world to come? Does not all nature teach the law of compensation—the very snows of winter and suns of summer, the blossomings of spring and the reapings of autumn? and “to be weighed down with a sense of our own incompleteness; to long after that which we have not and cannot gain; to descry noble attainments, as islands in the sea eagerly sought, but which change to clouds as we draw near; to spend life searching for hidden land, as Columbus for the new continent, and find only floating weeds and broken branches or an occasional bird from the unknown shore”; to bear, to suffer, and to do for the right and yet to be misunderstood, unrewarded, even persecuted—are not these not only the winds which God sends to fill our sails and give us good voyage homeward, but proofs as well of a higher state where all things shall be wisely measured and settled, and rewards and punishments fairly and adequately administered? Thus nature and reason, in the notion of happiness common to all men, in the desire for happiness that is universal, and in the only partial adjustment of all things in the present state, teach us the certainty of a reward beyond for obedient faith.

Coming now to divine revelation, life and immortality are fully brought to light. From the promise of God we know it. The perfect promise of our Father which includes all others is this: “God hath promised us even eternal life.” From the preparation for the happiness of the believer this is apparent. Things unseen, unheard of, are prepared for those that love God. A new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, a new Jerusalem with golden streets and jasper walls, a world without a night, without a pain, without a tear, without a sea, a rest that remaineth after multitudinous labors—these are but pictures of it, for its glory no eye hath seen, no ear heard, and it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive. Yet it is prepared, and some are prepared for it, and this preparation is for some that shall occupy it and enjoy it forever. Heaven is not a great seat of glory with lonely desolation. There will be millions there, vast multitudes which no man can number. From Christ’s actual possession of this state for His people this is evident. As a forerunner our Lord has entered and assumed possession as head and representative of the race whose flesh He took upon Him. He has gone to make ready. He will come again. He will receive His people to Himself that where He is there they may be also. From the Gospel call to eternal happiness this provision is assured. Lay hold on eternal life is the word. Stop not short, reach not for aught below that. Unto that are you called? The God of all grace hath called you to His eternal glory. Come unto Me all you that weary and are heavy laden and I will give you rest—rest that passeth all understanding, peace that floweth like a river, and righteousness as the waves of the sea. Is this a mockery of

human want? Is it not as certain, yea, a thousand times more certain, than the life that now is? From the grace of God implanted in the heart and the earnest of the spirit this is proven. What is the earnest of our inheritance? What is the indwelling of the spirit of God as a well of water springing up unto eternal life? What are these tastes for immortality, these longings after a beatified state, these delights in spiritual life and worship, and buddings and springings of spiritual rest and peace, but beginnings, foretastes, intimations, preparations for unspeakable things? From the present experience of the saints this condition is made known. Like the Israelites, they taste some clusters of the grapes of Canaan, some fruits of the good land. The first pickings tell of a glorious harvest. The glimpses of eternal joy caught from the heights of momentary transfiguration suffuse the soul with a glow that dies not. They sit at the gate, in the very suburbs of heaven, and as the portals open to let in one by one those that gather homeward, they peer through and wish they might enter there also. Is this desire to be absent from the body and present with the Lord meaningless? Is this pressing toward the mark reasonable without the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus? Were Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who died in the faith of a better country which they were seeking, deceived? Was Paul using mere imagery when he declared, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"? Are not Enoch and Elijah already there, and Abraham and Moses and Stephen and Paul? Is not this happiness begun even in this life, in the regeneration of men thus passing from death unto life, in the knowledge of God whom to know is eternal life, in the sweet, sanctifying, sustaining experiences of millions of saints? We know it.

Now what is this happiness? I do not know, I can't explain what spirit is. I know little of spiritual conditions. I comprehend not the union of my own body and spirit. Can I realize while in the flesh the meaning of happiness spiritual and eternal? It is called Heaven, Paradise, the inheritance of the saints in light illumined by God and the Lamb. It is signified by a house, the Father's house, a house not made with hands, many-mansioned, eternal in the heavens. It is declared to be a city, a city of God's preparing, a city that hath foundations, real, permanent, whose builder and maker is God. It is called a country, a better country, an inheritance, a kingdom, a crown of righteousness, glory, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory. It is pictured as a rest, a peace, a joy forever, a joy that cannot be taken away, a joy unspeakable and full of glory. Could terms and figures of speech better tell of a condition of freedom from all ills, afflictions, temptations, and persecutions and of the possession of all good, the enjoyment of God as our portion, a being with Christ, and having the society of angels and of the spirits of just men made perfect? The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Now all this remember is eternal. The righteous shall go into life eternal, life everlasting. Methusalah, we are told, was the oldest man the world has ever known, and "All the days of Methusalah were nine hundred sixty and nine years, *and he died.*" Of every one of the fathers we read, "and all the days of his years" were so many, "and he died." And as of man, so of all things created by man. Napoleon in the gallery of the Louvre turned from a splendid painting to Baron Denon and said, "That is a fine picture, Denon!" "Yes, immortal," was the reply. "How long will this picture or a statue last?" said Napoleon. "The picture five hundred years and a statue five thousand, Sire." "And this you call immortality?" said Napoleon. The unseen is the eternal. He that believeth on Christ hath everlasting life. As a life, the provision God has made for His people is eternal life, a life that shall never end. As a glory it is eternal glory, an eternal weight of glory, a crown of glory that fadeth not away. As a habitation it is a house eternal in the heavens, an everlasting habitation. As an inheritance it is an eternal inheritance, an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. As a city it is a continuing city, a city that hath foundations whose builder and maker is God. As a kingdom it is an everlasting kingdom, the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ who is without variableness or shadow of turning. As a country it is one in which the saints are not sojourners, a better country, a heavenly one, a being forever with the Lord. Is this a fancy? Are these poor words without meaning? You know they are not. Where then do you stand to-day? What are you going to do about this great matter? God who reveals it reveals but one way to prepare for it. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." What then will you do with Jesus that is called Christ? Face this question to-day. Cast it not off from you. It is the most serious of your life. It demands attention now. Whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.

✓ FUTURE HAPPINESS (PS. xvi., 11).—The happiness is complete "fulness of joy." In heaven there will be no more evil. All are free from sin; no consciousness of sin in ourselves and no sight of evil in others; no exposure to the snares and assaults of the great enemy of souls; no exposure to the wrath of an offended God; no sickness nor pain nor thirst, nor hunger nor sorrow nor death. There will be the enjoyment of all good. The saved will be with the glorified Saviour, see His glory, be like Him, share in His glorious bliss. The soul will be as happy as the soul can be, and will have everything that it can desire. Its joys will be eternal. They cannot be lost by the death of the soul. The joys themselves are not liable to decay. There is no robber to steal them and the fidelity of the Lord Jesus Christ to His own word secures them forever. How these thoughts sustain in the hour of adversity, animate in difficult duty, cast a glow over the whole of human life and tend to elevate the affections to the things that are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God!—*Rev. Baptist W. Noel (Episcopal).*

SEEKING THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

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When thou saidst, Seek ye My face, my heart said, Thy face, Lord, will I seek.—PSALM xxvii., 8.

WHEN the psalmist here introduces Jehovah as having said to him, "Seek ye My face," we need not, and I think should not, understand him as affirming that these words came to his ears in articulate utterance. And yet this was certainly possible, for He who made the tongue as an organ of speech, cannot He speak independently of the created organ? Did not Moses hear articulate words when he drew near to the burning bush in the wilderness of Midian? Did not the child Samuel hear his name called, and hear words spoken, when he was made the medium of divine communication to Eli? And when Paul was on his way to Damascus, and heard a voice calling him and saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" were they not audible words which Saul heard? Others than Moses, or Samuel, or Saul might have been near and not have heard the words, for they were intended only for the individuals to whom they brought divine messages; and we learn that the companions of Saul did not hear the words which he heard, but thought that it thundered.

But God has other means of speaking to His creature man than by the audible utterance of articulate words. God speaks in human consciousness, reason, thought, reflection, judgment, conscience, affections; in every faculty of his being; in every susceptibility of his nature, with as much intelligible distinctness, in the auditorium of the devout soul, as is possible to any speech of articulate form and sound. And it is to this manner of communication from the divine to the human mind we understand the psalmist to refer, when he represents Jehovah as having said to him, "Seek ye My face." Not by words that came to the bodily ear, but by words, or their equivalent, that came to the spiritual ear, David heard the Lord—of whom he wrote, He "is my light and my salvation"—enjoin it upon him to seek the Lord's face, and his grateful and loving heart responded, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."

1. *What is meant by the Lord's face?* It is a metaphor—a figure of speech—employed in accommodation to our limited capacity. We have no power to conceive, and no language to express, what utterly transcends our experience.

To ascribe organs, and faculties, and modes of manifestation to God like those which belong to man, is not to anthropomorphize God, because while we thus speak of God, we at the same time acknowledge the infinite inadequacy of any such representations of the divine being and nature, and of His methods of making Himself known to His intelligent creatures. We say that the eyes of God go to and fro throughout the whole earth beholding the evil and

the good, not that we would intimate that God has eyes as man has, but that God is an all-seeing God; for He who made the eye, shall not He see? Again we say, "Bow down Thine ear, O Lord, hear me," and "Incline Thine ear to my cry," but we do not suppose that God is dependent for His hearing upon an organ like that of the human ear; for He who made the ear, shall not He hear? Again it is said, "God's hand hath laid the foundations of the earth, and His right hand hath spanned the heavens," and "the firmament showeth His handy work;" but it is not meant by this to affirm that God is an architect who works by hands as man does; for He who made the hand and endowed it with power to execute the will of the purposing mind, has He not ability to do infinitely more than any mere human hand can do? And we speak of the arm of God. "Hast thou an arm like God?" "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm." But we do not therefore conceive of God as possessed of arms as is His creature man, but as having all power in the universe to do as He will, for the arm of God is the symbol of His omnipotence.

So when the psalmist speaks of the Lord's face, he would not thereby bring God down to the likeness of man, but using the most appropriate and expressive metaphor or symbol available to him for the purpose, he would thus give expression to his idea of the divine personality, for God is a person as man is a person, and of the evidences by which the Divine person makes Himself known to His rational creatures in His eternal, self-existent nature and in the infinite perfection of His being. God is the King eternal, immortal and *invisible*, and yet He may be seen; we may behold His face as He is manifested in the work of creation, the work of providence, and the work of redemption. Whatever brings God within the grasp of our cognitive faculties so that we can know Him—know that He is and what He is—is to us, as it were, the face of the Lord revealed, unveiled to our view, made visible to us. And thus we come to know Him, as one man knows another, by His face; by the manifestation He makes of Himself through the media of His works.

Hence, substituting for the metaphor in our text our interpretation of it, we will read: "When thou saidst, Seek ye the knowledge of God, my heart said, The knowledge of God will I seek."

2. *And what the Lord said to the psalmist, He says to every human soul, "Seek ye divine knowledge."* But how many of our race are deaf to the voice thus speaking to them, and therefore do not seek the knowledge of God! They have ears to hear, but do not hear.

To seek this knowledge is the indispensable condition of its attainment. Knowledge is not innate. It is acquired by seeking; by effort in the right use of faculties with which we have been naturally endowed. Isaiah says, "Verily Thou art a God that hidest Thyself." He hides Himself—is undiscoverable to all those who will not seek Him, who employ no effort to find Him. The same is true of every kind of knowledge. It is hidden, is undiscoverable and remains unknown, till sought out and found as the reward of seeking. Man was made to know. Knowledge is his distinguishing prerogative, as compared with all other orders of animal being on earth. And how wide the range of

his knowledge! How vast its extent! How varied its objects! How wonderful its attainments! But in all this wide range, this vast extent, this variety of objects and these wonderful attainments, nothing approaches, in its intrinsic grandeur and interest and in its doctrinal and practical and scientific importance to the moral and intellectual character and destiny of man, the knowledge of Jehovah.

But there are those who say that God is unknowable, unthinkable, inconceivable, and they say this in the name of what they call exact, or positive, science. But it is in the abused name of science this is said; in the name of that science which only knows physical things, and knows them only through the media of the bodily senses. It is an assumption, however, most false, as the testimony of human history and universal experience attests. As a matter of fact, we *do* form a conception of God, and He is, therefore, conceivable; He *is* an object of thought, and therefore thinkable; we *can* know that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, for He has been and is an object of knowledge to millions of mankind.

And yet it is sadly true that the world, by mere human wisdom—human philosophy—knows not God. Intellectually that which may be known of God is manifest everywhere. "For the invisible things of God, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead," so that the heathen who have changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things; and the agnostics who say they cannot know God, and that He is unknowable; and the atheists who say there is no God, are all inexcusable. And they thus err because intellect alone does not suffice to put us in possession of that knowledge, which, while it taxes every faculty of the intellect to apprehend it, must also be apprehended by our spiritual faculties in conjunction with our intellectual. The heart must give its earnest consent to the discoveries of the intellect in this exalted sphere of human seeking after knowledge, else the knowledge is unattainable.

3. *Hence, the office of the heart is a prime necessity in the search after the knowledge of God.* If man were an intellectual being only, it might suffice for him to know only the facts and phenomena of the visible universe—the laws and forces of mere physical nature, without concerning himself with questions of theology. But man is a moral—more than this, he is a religious—being as well as an intellectual one, and the faculties of his moral and religious nature are requisite, as well as those of his intellectual, to enable him to seek the knowledge of God successfully.

The sceptical scientist repudiates the heart—in other words, the moral and religious faculties of man—in his search after the First Cause of all things. He says the heart prejudices the enquiry into the truth or falsity of theological beliefs. He demands that the heart shall be averse to the doctrine of the divine existence, the prime doctrine of all religion, as a requisite qualification to any one who may search after the truth upon this subject. He holds that

it is a question which concerns the intellect exclusively, and only those evidences which the intellect can appreciate are appropriate to its investigation, and should have influence in leading us to our conclusions. Thus he shows that he grossly misunderstands the nature of the question, and proves the fact, in his own experience, that the world by wisdom knows not God.

To the command of God, "Seek ye my face," David's heart replied, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek." From this we are not to infer that he lightly esteemed the office of his intellect in this search after God, for in the nature of things, if he put his heart in requisition in the conduct of his enquiry after divine truth, his intellect would not be ignored in its peculiar office in this enquiry, but on the contrary, would be the more carefully and earnestly and diligently employed; for in this field of enquiry the heart without the intellect is blind, and the intellect without the heart is blind also. But it must be a heart not alienated from God, not averse to the belief of a personal God, who is a "Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth;" who cannot look upon iniquity; who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin, and yet who will, by no means, clear the guilty; a God whom no man can see without holiness, and before whose judgment-seat we must all appear, and give an account of the deeds done in the body, whether they be good or bad. A heart which is, in its affections, averse to a belief in the being and government of such a God as is thus described, has a veil upon it by which it is rendered impervious to conviction of the error of its unbelief. A man, actuated by such a heart, will not like to retain the knowledge of God; much less will he be disposed to pursue the acquisition of such knowledge. It is in his heart the fool says there is no God. So, whether a man be a theist or an atheist depends upon his heart. The office of the heart here is controlling. "Out of the heart," especially in the matter of religious beliefs and duties, "are the issues of life."

David's heart was not in an attitude of hostility to God—had no feeling of aversion to Him, but having been enabled to say, by divine grace, "the Lord is my light and my salvation," nothing could afford him more delight—nothing could be more in accordance with his heart's affections and desires than to seek continually to know more and more of his Divine Benefactor. Hence his heart said "Thy face, O Lord, will I seek." With him there was heart-seeking and heart-finding, and heart-finding and heart-seeking; the more he knew of God, the more he sought to know of Him, for God was to him an inexhaustible source and object of knowledge, and of soul-felt joy and peace.

David's God was the same as He who is the God of the Christian. If He had not been so, David could never have realized Him as his "light and his salvation," for it was true then as it is now that there is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we must be saved, except the name of Christ, the God-man Redeemer. But now life and immortality have been brought to light by the Gospel as they were not before the fact had transpired, which had, long preceding, been promised, of the offering up

of the true sacrifice for sin, by the death upon the cross of the Son of God in the person of Jesus Christ. When the heart has been brought under the power of this truth that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life, then that heart will delight itself supremely in the knowledge of God, and will pursue it. To such a heart, as to David's, the heavens will declare the glory of God, and the firmament will show forth His handy work, and the whole earth will be filled with His glory. To such a heart all history will be a history of divine providence, and will demonstrate His goodness, and how He causes even the wrath of man to praise Him. With such a heart in us, the cross on which our Saviour died, or rather His death upon the cross, will bring God before us so that we will be constrained to fly to His loving embrace; for in this exhibition of God's infinite love for us is the attraction which draws all men to God, and here it is that God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son of God, He hath declared Him." He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also, for Christ says, "I and the Father are one." "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the Glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

PERSONAL PIETY (PSALMS xxvii., 8).—How many are the ways in which God addresses to all the exhortation, "Seek ye My face"? His voice syllabling these words, is heard in those promptings of conscience by which numbers are made uneasy in the practice of sin. The sacraments of the Church, the sermons of faithful ministers, all the public ordinances of religion—what are they but vehicles through which the same message is continually conveyed? The daily mercies of life, the occasional trials and bereavements—they do all but give utterance to the same call. In prosperity there is a whisper—"Seek ye My face"; I have richer things in store than any earthly or perishable good. And if adversity have a rougher tone, its speech is still—"Seek ye My face"; this world is not your rest, and I would have you look for a brighter above. And what is the answer of the heart? Does the heart reply with that of David—"Thy face, Lord, will I seek"? I can wish nothing more excellent for myself, nothing more excellent for any, than the being able with sincerity to declare, that wheresoever is heard the message, then is delivered the response of our text. But in hundreds of cases the message is heard and no answer given, unless that of refusal or a frivolous excuse. Ah, if there are such words in the Bible as "Seek ye My face," there are also such words—"They shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me." We must not presume on the graciousness or long-suffering of God. Carefully observe that it is *when* or *while*, God saith, "Seek ye My face," that the heart of David declares, "Thy face, Lord, will I seek."—*Canon H. Melvill (Episcopal), London.*

THE FAULTLESS CHRIST.

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Pilate saith unto them, take ye Him and crucify Him; for I find no fault in Him.—JOHN xix., 6.

BOTH the character and the nature of Jesus have for many ages been subjects of deep and earnest discussion. The Gnostics regarded Him as an emanation from God. In their opinion He was neither truly God, nor truly man. Not truly God, because they held Him to be much inferior to the Father—not truly man, because He did things which lay beyond the power of human beings to perform. The Monarchians taught that He was the true God inhabiting the body of Jesus, the divine nature occupying the place, and performing the functions of the human soul. The Nestorians assumed that He possessed two natures—a “proper divinity, and a proper humanity;” but that they remained distinct—were not united in one person—did not blend into a single self-conscious personality, but were united only by a moral, or sympathetic union.

Another sect mentioned by Mosheim taught that Christ was, when born, wholly human, but that the wisdom, spirit, and Godhood of the Father descended into Him, and enabled Him to teach, and work miracles, as no human being could teach and work; and that on this account it was “right to speak of Christ as God, though not God in the full and proper sense of the word.” Sabellius, Julian, Socinus and other early writers have expressed somewhat similar views; but all seem to be entirely without foundation in the writings of the Evangelists.

Coming down to modern writers, Strauss denies His divinity, and asserts that the things ascribed to Him are in the main mythical; but says: “He remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought, and no perfect piety is possible without His presence in the heart; and that to enjoy religion without Christ would be as absurd as to speak of enjoying poetry without regard to Homer or Shakespeare.” Renan says of Him: “In the first rank of the grand family of the true sons of God, we must place Jesus. God does not speak to Him from *without*, for God is *in* Him. He feels that He is with God. He lives in the bosom of God by uninterrupted communication. He understands Him without need of the thunder and the burning bush like Moses—without a revealing tempest like Job—without an oracle like the old Greek sages, and without an angel Gabriel like Mohammed. He believes that He is in direct communication with God—believes Himself the Son of God; and, the highest consciousness of God which ever existed in the breast of humanity was that of Jesus.” And Rousseau, who was by no means a friend of Jesus, concludes a beautiful eulogy on His nature and character by saying: “Yes, if the life and death of Socrates were those of a sage, then, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God.”

Thus we see that a variety of opinions have been entertained with regard to the nature of Christ; that is, whether He be human, or divine, or both.

But it is to His moral nature and character to which I more particularly desire to invite your attention at this time. Pilate, in the text, says of Jesus: "*I find no fault in Him.*"

I assume, then, that the nature of Christ was sinless—that His character, as presented to us by the New Testament writers, and as it now stands pictured before the world, was perfect. I shall not attempt to prove this from the Bible directly, or by any strictly theological argumentation; but rather by showing some of the difficulties which lie in the way of describing a faultless character, such as the Evangelists have delineated.

First, they could not have drawn, as they evidently have, a perfect character unless they had had before them a perfect *model*. They could not by any possibility have imagined a character so faultless as that of Jesus. They *must* have had a model. We claim, then, that Jesus, the Christ, as He stood before them, and before the world, was the model from which they drew their picture. Where could another have been found? Was there a Pharisee, a Sadducee, a Rabbi whom they would have accepted as such? Would the holiest of all the High Priests, taken right from the sacred altar, have served the high purpose? No; not even the saintly Stephen. And besides this, it is not likely that they could have come to any satisfactory agreement as to what would constitute a faultless character, a perfect life. A Roman would have one standard, a Greek another, a Hebrew another—a Sadducee one idea, a Pharisee another. Perhaps no two men could have been found whose ideals of a perfect life were just the same. And yet here, in Jesus, is a life and character, as delineated by His four biographers, of which all nationalities, all sects, and even His own enemies unite in saying, as did Pilate: "I find no fault in Him." And then, there was this special difficulty in the way. The work to be performed, that is, the character to be delineated, was not to be done by *one* person, but by four, and all acting independently of each other. It is as if two artists were to engage in carving a statue—one to shape the arms, another the hands, another the feet, and a fourth to form the head, then bringing them all together and joining them so as to form a perfect whole. Would we not regard this as an impossibility? Can we not readily see how the matter would be complicated, and how improbable it would be that there would be any harmony or beauty about it? Name any of the celebrated statues which stand as the highest representatives of art and genius—Apollo Belvidere, Minerva, or the Greek Slave—each of these is the work of *one* person—one mind originated the conception, *one* hand alone carved that conception on the inanimate marble. No such work of art as those alluded to could have been produced by any two or more artists, even if they were all in the same studio, and aiming to work in perfect concert. There would have been such a disagreement in taste and fancy that a compromise on any point or feature would, in all probability, have given to that part a distorted and uncomely shape, thus marring the artistic beauty of

the figure. But in the wonderful statue which those four untrained artists have carved and set up in the centre of the ages, there is no want of harmony or beauty. It is faultless in conception, perfect in all its attributes. For eighteen centuries it has withstood the critic's most scrutinizing gaze, and compelled the admiration of all the world. Now how can a work so anomalous as this be accounted for? Simply and only by acknowledging that the minds and hands and pens of those four unlettered fishermen were directed by the guiding hand of the Most High God.

But in connection with this it may be well to call attention to the fact that the Evangelists never sought to represent Jesus as a perfect man, and manifestly had no anxiety to express their own opinion as to that. They never said that His was a perfect life. They uttered no comment on His conduct, as to whether it was faultless or not. They simply described what He did and related what He said, leaving every man to make his own comment, leaving the world to judge from His words and actions whether or not His life was without fault. They present Him under such an infinite variety of circumstances, and in such endless diversity of action that His character could not but be developed and exhibited before the world in its true light. He preaches on the mount, in the temple, on the streets, by the seaside, and teaches from house to house. He mingles with thousands of people of all classes, rich and poor, wicked and good, friends and foes, the sick and the dying. And yet, under all this variety of circumstances, the world, the whole world—every nation, from the king on the throne to the servant at his feet—the learned and the unlearned—every sect, the Jew and the Gentile, have all, watching Him with eagle eye, pronounced His life and character faultless. Even those who are avowedly the enemies of Christ, and His Cross, unite with Pilate in saying, "I find no fault in Him."

But the forming of the statue alluded to a moment ago would present but a small part of the difficulty to be encountered in sketching the true character of the Christ. They were to delineate His character, not only as a *man*, but as a Being in whom the divinity and the humanity were mysteriously united—perfect as a *man*, perfect as the incarnate *Deity*. We may know what a *man* will do under certain circumstances—how he will think, and speak, and act. But how can we know what *God* will do—how He will think, or speak, or act under the same circumstances?

Still more. By what means should we know how the divine and human nature could be so blended that the actions of each and of both could be represented as the actions of *one* person? There was a difficulty of putting into the mouth of one, words becoming both God and man. It were difficult to blend the humility of His manhood with the dignity of His Godhood. For this there was no model. None of the descriptions of the gods in heathen mythology would do for an example. He must be described as acting at one and the same time, both as God and as man—speaking as God and as man—suffering as God and as man—dying as God and as man—rising from the grave as God and as man—ascending the heavens as God and as man.

He must be represented not only as a man, hungry, thirsty, sad and weary, but as a God feeding the hungry, healing the sick, raising the dead, and calming the storm-tossed sea. Now, who could describe such a being under such a diversity of circumstances and complications, and yet do it in words that all will recognize their fitness? How could this be done by those uneducated biographers? That it *has* been done no one can deny. Jesus Christ, the Son of Mary, the Son of God, the Incarnate Deity stands before the world divinely perfect.

I remark further, that had the biographers of Christ been any other than men who were guided by the Holy Ghost, we would not have the life of Him that we now have in the New Testament. It would have been marked by other, and by very different characteristics. In the language of another: "We should either have had a character intensely and thoroughly *Jewish*—which the character of Jesus is not—with Jewish conceptions; a narrow, bigoted Messiah; a prince; a conqueror; a deliverer; a Judas Maccabæus; a restorer of the pomp and pride of the ancient monarchy, in accordance with the Jewish conceptions of the Messiah, or we should have had a biography full of trifles and small conceits; of foolish marvels; of improbable stories—a biography that might have rivalled the 'Arabian Nights' Entertainments,' such as the writers of the Jewish Talmud would have been likely to produce."

Dr. Bushnell says: "If any writer of almost any age will undertake to describe, not merely a spotless, but a superhuman and celestial character, not having the reality before him, he must be somewhat more than human himself if he does not pile together a mass of clumsy exaggerations, and draw, and overdraw till neither heaven nor earth can find any verisimilitude in the picture."

Dr. Schaff in his "Person of Christ" says: "While the Evangelists expressly reserve the performance of miracles to the age of maturity and public life, and observe a significant silence concerning the parents of Jesus, the pseudo-evangelists fill the infancy of the Saviour and His mother with the strangest prodigies, and make the active intercession of Mary very prominent throughout. According to their representation, even dumb idols, irrational beasts, and senseless trees, bow in adoration before the infant Jesus on His journey to Egypt; and after His return, when yet a boy of five or seven years, He changes balls of clay into flying birds for the idle amusement of His playmates; strikes terror round about Him, dries up a stream of water by a mere word, transforms His companions into goats, raises the dead to life, and performs all sorts of miraculous cures through a magical influence which proceeds from the very water in which He washed, the towels which He used, and the bed on which He slept."

What absurdities! The evangelists speak in no such silly terms in the noble and wonderful biography of Jesus which they have given to the world. We are proud of it; and proud of Him whose life and character it portrays. Neither imagination, erudition, philosophy, ancient lore, nor classic embellishment can add strength or beauty. Peerless and complete, it stands the shining, crowning monument of all the ages.

We ask again, how can this be accounted for? How could those four unschooled and obscure men delineate what the world universally unites in calling a perfect and sinless character? Can it be explained by declaring it to be a work of fiction? It certainly cannot; for this would not relieve the case in the least. Besides this, the life of Jesus of Nazareth cannot by any possibility be made a fiction any more than can the life of Daniel Webster, because He is a real historical personage—as real as Alexander, Napoleon, or Washington. That He lived and founded the Christian religion is a fact recognized by all historians who have written since the beginning of the Christian era. The history of Christ is the centre, the converging point of all history.

Can we account for this exceptional biography by styling it a work of transcendent genius? No; for genius on her grandest heights and brightest moods never attempted to sketch such a portrait. But here, by this work, these plain fishermen of Galilee have given to themselves an immortality that will never fade—a glory such as shall never cluster around the brow of Herodotus, Josephus, or Macaulay. They have carved a statue in the person of Christ which even Apollo himself might well envy.

And now, reader, what think ye of Christ? Ever lived there one to whom He can be compared? Can any other one be found in all the dramas, fictions, and histories of the world of whom it will be said in all ages, and by all classes; “I find no fault in Him?” Has there ever been any other one presented to our minds, who can at the same time manifest the meekness of a man and the majesty of a God? Where is there one that can be a model for kings and princes, sages and philosophers, the wise and the ignorant, the rich and the poor? Where is there one but He, who will be a companion for the young and the old—who will stand by us in prosperity and in adversity; under obloquy and reproach; in joy and in sorrow; in sickness and in death? When the enemy’s darts fly thick and fast around us, who but He can throw a shield about our defenceless heads? When tossed upon life’s billowy sea, when the tempest is wild and the waves are high, who is it but He that can hush the storm, and say to the winds and the waves, “Peace be still”? And when the closing hour of life has come, when heart and flesh are failing, when we are stepping down into the cold waves and the dark valley, upon whose arm, upon whose rod and staff but His can we lean while passing through? In a word, where *is* there, or where *has* there been, either in reality or in fiction, any such character, except in the ever blessed and glorious Person of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Truly, the Evangelists have sketched a stainless character. His purity is established by the fact that He became a sin-offering, which was required by the law to be without blemish. His innocency is declared by the figure of the Lamb which is applied to Him. John, pointing to Him, said, “Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.”

Paul says in one place, “He was made perfect through sufferings;” and in another, “For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.” And Peter

speaks of Him as one, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth."

Such was the high and holy character which Jesus sustained all through life, though He lived, labored, and taught among those who watched Him closely, who judged Him harshly, who sought to entrap Him, to entangle Him in His talk. But after passing through thirty-three years of trial, subjected all the while to the severest ordeal that Roman hate and Jewish prejudice could invent; after being watched and criticized at all times and places—on the streets, in the synagogue, in the wilderness, by the seaside, on the Sabbath-day, at the marriage feast, at the bedside of the sick, and even at the house of death and mourning, they utterly failed to find any just accusation against Him. And at last, when betrayed, arrested and hurried by cruel hands before the court, and into the presence of those who sought His life, and were thirsting for His blood—even here, with bribed and purjured witnesses all around Him, no charge of guilt could be sustained. And after the most scrutinizing investigation before the court, Pilate, having already washed his hands from the blood of this innocent man, arose from his judgment-seat and declared before the clamoring Jews, "*I find in Him no fault at all;*" thus bearing solemn and weighty testimony to the effect that His life was sinless, His character faultless.

Oh, the sinless Saviour! the faultless Christ! the spotless Lamb of God! We confess Thee, we adore Thee, we magnify Thy Holy Name. "Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured into Thy lips. Whom have we in Heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that we desire besides Thee."

Brethren, I rejoice that this same Jesus who stands faultless before the world, before angels, before God the Father, is *our* Saviour, our King, our Elder Brother, our great Exemplar; and the divine Model after which we may well fashion our lives. He is worthy of imitation, worthy of all confidence, "worthy of all acceptance." I glory in such a King, in such a Saviour, in such a Brother, in such a lofty and holy relationship; a relationship that allies me to angels, that constitutes me an heir of God, a joint heir with Jesus Christ—heir to all that is rich, and beautiful, and glorious in the world to come—heir to a crown, "to an inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away." I count it my highest honor to be permitted to proclaim such a Saviour to my fellow-men, to a perishing world—a Saviour without sin, a Saviour who is the Desire of all nations, a Saviour mighty to deliver, "able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

"O could I speak the matchless worth,
O could I sound the glories forth,
Which in my Saviour shine,
I'd soar, to touch the heavenly strings,
And vie with Gabriel while he sings
In notes almost divine.

"I'd sing the characters He bears,
'And all the forms of love He wears,
Exalted on His throne:
In loftiest songs of sweetest praise,
I would, to everlasting days,
Make all His glories known."

➤ Funeral Service ➤

THE RIPE CHRISTIAN.

BY THAIN DAVIDSON, D.D., PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, COLEBROOKE ROW, LONDON.

Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season.—
JOB. v., 26.

THE illustration is drawn from agricultural life. It is the close of harvest, and the busy reapers are carrying home the spoil. There are few scenes to be witnessed upon earth more pleasing and attractive. How suggestive of comfort and plenty! What a picture of happy industry and well-rewarded toil! How exquisite the patches of color! How merry and melodious the song! Mark how skilfully the reaper handles his sickle, and clutches the corn; one sweep, and the whole armful is down, and laid so neat and level that when the band is put round the sheaf almost every straw is of equal length. The single stem is called "a stalk of corn"; the armful, which the reaper cuts down with one sweep of his hook, is called "a sheaf"; whilst a bundle of sheaves, placed together and set upright, ready to be borne away to the homestead, is styled, from an old Dutch root, "a shock of corn." Well, what an interesting and significant metaphor this is! and how suggestive! How much there is in that bundle of wheat-sheaves, now ready to be carried home, to remind you of the aged Christian, who has served his generation by the will of God! What anxiety has been expended upon that corn! Through what risks and storms has it come! When first it sprang up, the husbandman had many fears regarding it. He saw a long interval of danger, before that tiny green blade would be a sturdy stalk, with "the full corn in the ear." A thousand contingencies might occur to check the growth or affect the quality of the grain, and the value of the harvest. But now it has been brought safely through all these risks. The little green thing has become a vigorous and fruitful stalk. The reaper's sickle has swept through the yellow corn, and laid down sheaves ready for the binding, and skilful hands have tied up the sheaves, and have set them in erect and compact "shocks," still further to ripen in the sunshine and the crisp autumnal air. And now, at last, the ponderous wain comes up, and the shocks are borne away to the cosy homestead, where they are securely housed. The farmer's solicitude is over; his months of anxious toil are ended; the grain is safely gathered in—how much in all this to suggest the closing scene in the life of a ripe believer. "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season." As we read the text we naturally think of the old and grey-headed saint. How many years of anxiety have been expended upon him! How many storms have swept over him! Through what a variety of experience has he passed! Perhaps in early life he gave little promise of a long and useful career. Yet here he is, come to life's close in happiness and honor. He has weathered the blasts, he has

borne his fruit, he has served his generation, and all that remains for him is just to be gathered in—gently borne away to the homestead of heaven. Yet I would not have you run away with the idea that the text applies exclusively to the aged. This prominent idea is not so much old age, as ripeness, maturity. It does not say, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in old age," but "in a full age." There is a difference. Ben. Jonson truly says—

"It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be:
Or standing long, an oak three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald and sere:
A lily of the day

Is fairer far in May,
Although it fall and die that night:
It was the plant and flower of light:
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be."

Old age is not absolutely promised to all God's people; but a "full age" is. It is noticeable that, although in the early history of the human race, many lived to a great length of time, even to hundreds of years, it is not recorded in Scripture of any of these that they died "in a good old age, and full of years;" not until we come to Abraham is such a record given; although his term of life was but a fourth of that of many who had gone before him; the reason probably being that, though Abraham's years were fewer, yet his virtues were greater; his life was a life of faith and therefore of completeness. I have seen a matured saint cut off at twenty; and another man, not nearly so ripe, at three-score and ten. You may remember how, addressing young men, Solomon, with characteristic sagacity, makes the distinction I am indicating. "My son," he says, "keep my commandments: for length of days, and long life, shall they add to thee"; intimating, of course, that the natural tendency of virtue is to lengthen a man's days; but that, whether such a man's days shall be many or few, he shall, at all events, have "a long life," in the sense of a full and complete one.

"They err, who measure life by years,
With false and thoughtless tongue:
Some hearts grow old before their time,
Others are always young.

"'Tis not the number of the lines
On life's fast-filling page;
'Tis not the pulse's added throbs,
Which constitute true age."

Amongst moral and responsible beings, that life is really the longest, however brief its outward term, into which the largest amount of beneficent activity is condensed. Now, were my aim to build up a sermon, after the usual fashion, out of this text, I might find three pleasant thoughts suggested here in regard to a good man's death.

First, *it is not unwelcome*. "Thou shalt come to thy grave." He is not driven or dragged to it, as may be said of many an ungodly man. God makes him willing when He has made him ready. I have often been struck with the fact that, when the end of a Christian's life begins to draw near, however reluctant he had been hitherto to leave the world, and however he may even have dreaded his departure, all that reluctance and fear melts away.

Secondly, *the death of a good man is seasonable*. "As a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

And thirdly, as death is welcome to the ripe believer, and seasonable, so *it is honorable*. It is no ignominious blow; it is not a crushing, humiliating, stroke; it is a release, an enfranchisement, a coronation.

The Pulpit Treasury

Conducted by a corps of eminent Clergymen.

J. SANDERSON, D.D., MANAGING EDITOR.

E. B. TREAT, Publisher,

771 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

On and after May 1st the office of the PULPIT TREASURY will be in the new building 771 Broadway, north-west corner of Ninth Street, opposite the store of the late A. T. Stewart.

Vol. II. APRIL, 1885. No. 12.

Yearly, in advance,	-	-	\$2.50
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partment of their magazine admirably adapted to its object, giving their work favor and wonderful acceptance with all their brethren in the ministry, and bringing them words of encouragement in the brilliant testimonials voluntarily accorded to THE PULPIT TREASURY.

On the border-line that marks their second year's editorial and publishing work, they raise their Ebenezer, and pour over it their oil of gratitude and praise.

Sleeping in Church.—Is this your infirmity? Seek strength to overcome it by earnest prayer before you visit the house of God, that you may not be so under the influence of your fleshly nature as to permit drowsiness to get the mastery and thus rob the soul of its opportunity for obtaining strength, light and food; and while seated in the sanctuary apply to the same source for aid that the preacher may be directed into all truth, be helped in its delivery and that the message which he brings may be to you the very "joy and rejoicing of your heart."

 **Ascertained Evolution.**—No subject has engrossed in these latter days more of the time and thought of philosophic minds than that which is commonly expressed by the one word, evolution. As it is generally used it implies an invisible process whose results can only be seen as they develop according to the evolving law. But we use it at present in reference to the evolutionary improvement in THE PULPIT TREASURY, whose monthly issues have shown a gradual but sure advance in all good qualities and whose past character and present status is a sure indication of what its future is to be. This mode of progress is sure. It is an evolution that is ascertained. It involves a gain that is permanent. It demonstrates what may be expected next year in THE PULPIT TREASURY from the manifest advancement made in the past year, in which it has gone on monthly from "strength to strength." Our promise and outlook for the future are based on this advanced

ground, steadily gained and held, and from which we will push forward to the achievement of new and certain victories.

Gospel Literature.—This is what THE PULPIT TREASURY undertakes to furnish during the coming year to pastors, Christian workers and families. Its conductors feel that the steadily increasing success of THE PULPIT TREASURY imposes an additional responsibility upon them to meet and thoroughly deserve the appreciation and encouragement of Christendom. They will therefore aim, with increasing effort, to supply in each department whatever is adapted to enlighten and guide, stimulate and elevate, without any sectarian tendency. The table of contents each month will thus be unsurpassed in richness and variety. The attractions will be continuously increasing as new and valuable features are added and as each monthly issue excels its predecessor in merit and popularity.

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The most trustworthy facts in modern Biblical research will be gathered by the ablest specialists, and articles on other suitable subjects will be supplied by the foremost living authors.

THE PULPIT TREASURY will be in the future as in the past, in the truest sense a witness-bearer for the truth. We have given on our second page of cover only a few of the names of the large array of distinguished writers, clerical and lay, who will enrich our pages during the ensuing year.

We do not specify topics, for several of these will embrace current matters as they arise, and because some of our contributors do not desire to have their names announced many months in advance. Let it suffice, that we have on hand a large number of articles on deeply interesting and timely themes, from some of the best

writers in all the evangelical denominations in three continents.

Articles from each department of THE PULPIT TREASURY are constantly copied in the religious magazines and papers of America, Europe and Asia.

Every Christian minister will find in THE PULPIT TREASURY the choicest help and suggestion for every department of his work, gathered from the whole horizon of current thought and Christian endeavor to win the world to Christ.

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With these inducements in addition to our *Premium offers*, in books worth having, as detailed on the first page of advertisements, we hope an earnest effort will be made in each congregation by the pastor to secure new subscribers and if the money cannot be spared now, it can be sent any time before July 1st, 1885.

A free specimen copy will always be sent on application by postal card or letter, and one dollar will be taken at any time for a subscription of six months.

Bound Volumes.—This number completes the second year of THE PULPIT TREASURY. A few bound volumes of the first year are still for sale at \$3.00 each, to subscribers \$2.00. Bound volumes of the second year will be sold at the same price.



VERMONT AVENUE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.

Church organized 1843. Church edifice erected 1882-83. Dedicated January 20th, 1884. Dimensions, 105 by 70 feet; height of roof, 80 feet; height of spire, 137 feet. Cost of building and lots, \$63,000. Seating Capacity, 800.

Rev. FREDERICK D. POWER, Pastor.

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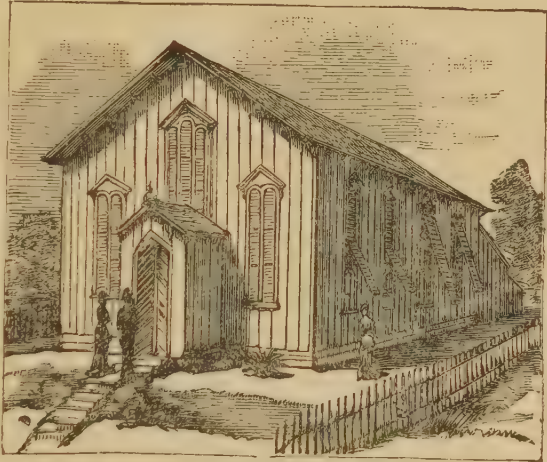
Rev. Frederick D. Power.

The Pastor of the Vermont Avenue Christian Church of Washington, D. C., is a Virginian, though for ten years he has been located at the Capital. He was born near Yorktown, Va., January 23d, 1851, the second of a family of nine children. Dr. Robert H. Power, his father, is a prominent physician on what is known as "The Peninsula," between the York and James Rivers, every foot of which from Fortress Monroe to Richmond is historic ground. His mother was Miss Abigail M. Jencks, of De Ruyter, Madison Co., N. Y., a teacher, educated at Miss Willard's school in Troy. The union of North and South in his parentage resulted in a liberal spirit.

The early life of the subject of this sketch was spent upon the farm. His home is midway between Yorktown, of revolutionary memory, and Bethel where the first battle of the late war was fought on June 10th, 1862. This region was the scene of constant military operations from the opening to the close of the conflict. His primary education was received altogether from his mother, who was a woman of very superior culture and unsurpassed beauty of spirit. In 1868 he entered Bethany College, West Virginia, an institution founded by Alexander Campbell, and graduated in the full classical course in three years. His diploma bears the name "J. A. Garfield," who was a trustee of the College.

At eighteen years he commenced preaching, and at twenty graduated, and was soon after regularly ordained to the ministry, and assumed the charge of three country churches in Eastern Virginia.

The experience in this field for two years was of great value to him. The churches were widely separated and the work laborious. He was married March 17th, 1874, to Miss Emily B. Alsop, of Fredericksburg, Va. In January of that year he had been called to the Church of the Disciples in Charlottesville and remained there until September when he took the position of Adjunct Professor of Ancient Languages in his Alma Mater. This chair he filled one year, resigning at the close of the session to take charge of the church



FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D. C.

IN WHICH PRESIDENT GARFIELD WORSHIPPED.

of which he is now pastor, and entering upon his work in September, 1875. Since then he has patiently and perseveringly labored in the face of many difficulties with encouraging success.

The "Disciples of Christ" number about 4,000 churches and 700,000 communicants. Their strength is largely in the West and South-west. East of the Alleghanies they have few churches, except in Virginia and North Carolina, and perhaps not 40,000 members. The church in Washington was organized in 1843.

The organization was effected by Dr. J. T. Barclay, afterwards Missionary to Jerusalem and author of "The City of the Great King." There were but eight persons in this nucleus. These few disciples met from house to house to break bread, the Lord's Supper being religiously observed as in all their churches on every first day of the week in accord with the primitive practice. Indeed the whole plea of this religious people is for the restoration of the original apostolic Gospel and order of things, as understood by them, and the union upon this foundation, of all who love the Lord in "One body and one spirit as they are called in hope of their calling one Lord, one faith, and one baptism and one God and Father over all." To this end they wish to be known only by names which designate the followers of Christ in the Scriptures, "Christians" or "Disciples of Christ," and their churches as "churches of Christ" or Christian churches, and have no human authoritative creed, demand only a confession of faith in Christ with all the heart, repentance, and a "burial with Christ in baptism" as pre-requisite to membership in the Church. This movement has been marked by a growth in fifty years which may be called phenomenal.

During the ten years of Mr. Power's pastorate the church on Vermont Avenue has passed through experiences which, perhaps, never fell to the lot of any other religious body. Its early history was one of constant struggle. Some had been added from time to time, and these with accessions by letter from different parts of the country strengthened the little band until they were able to hire a hall and have occasional preaching. They met for some time in the City Hall where General Garfield often spoke for them. Judge J. S. Black, when Attorney General in Buchanan's Cabinet, also met with them. In 1869 they purchased from the Methodist Episcopal Church South, a small frame chapel which was removed from M Street to Vermont Avenue. After the present pastor took charge of the congregation it steadily grew in numbers until the little structure, which

could not seat over four hundred, was crowded, and the membership numbered three hundred. The election to the Presidency in 1880 of one of its members in the person of Mr. Garfield, who was known to be a constant and active communicant here, at once attracted most distinguished attention from the press and the people to the little quiet-going body. Long articles appeared in the newspapers touching the teaching and practice of the Church, magazines illustrated it, the services were largely reported, and the simple worshippers crowded out of their places by sight-seers and prominent people wishing favors under the new administration. The very simplicity of the surroundings where the new President worshipped seemed to inspire every one with the deepest interest, and people were turned away by hundreds and came as early as the Sunday-school hour to secure seats. The congregation recognized the necessity of building a larger house, a want which had been long felt, but which was now imperative. As the people were generally poor, mainly clerks in the Government offices, a movement was set on foot to raise money among the churches of the Disciples through the States. Many of the finest churches at the Capital were built in this way. This work was being pushed when President Garfield was shot. The assassin had planned his deed for the church. For this purpose he followed the President to the house and took his place in the congregation, but fearing he might not succeed waited until the Wednesday following and then went to the church and examined the window by which he noticed the President sat on the front pew to the left of the pulpit, determined to accomplish his design on the following Lord's day from a position outside of the window. Mr. Garfield left the city that week for Long Branch with Mrs. Garfield, who was just recovering from severe illness, and thus the church was spared the bloody tragedy. The subsequent history of this melancholy affair is familiar to every one. This old pew is preserved in the new church. During the President's sickness meetings were held daily and often twice

a day for prayer which was largely attended and by all denominations. This great trouble put a stop for the time to the work of raising funds for the new building, though several thousand dollars were contributed as a thank offering when at one time his recovery seemed possible. The corner-stone of the structure was not laid until July 2d, 1882, the first anniversary of the shooting. More than five thousand people were said to be present on the occasion. The building was completed and dedicated January 20th, 1884, President W. K. Pendleton, of Bethany College, preaching the dedicatory discourse, the President and many distinguished people being present.

The tragic end of Mr. Garfield did not retard the prosperity of the church but rather added a new interest to it in the eyes of the people. Since the occupancy of the new house the congregations have largely increased and the growth of its membership is steady. It now numbers 460 members and has a flourishing Sunday-school of 325. In December, 1881, the pastor was chosen by acclamation Chaplain of the House of Representatives

and served the Forty-seventh Congress in that capacity. As a preacher he is plain and practical. His sermons are well studied and delivered without notes. He thinks he received his highest compliment from a friend who thought them "easily digested." As a pastor he is diligent and constant in his attentions to his people, especially in his care for the poor and the children. As a writer he has contributed some papers to reviews and public journals but is indisposed to such work. He is nearly six feet in height and weighs 160 pounds, has gray eyes, and dark hair which at thirty-four years of age is well sprinkled with gray.

Mr. Power gained considerable celebrity by his brilliant lecture on "The Christian Life and Character of President Garfield." It was an impressive and effective panegyric, delivered with great eloquence, with alternating pathos, solemnity and tenderness and with the ease and grace of the genuine orator. Though a young man he has taken high rank among the noted preachers of the land, and has the promise of a bright future in the church of "The Disciples of Christ."

LEADING THOUGHTS OF SERMONS

God's Laws Limit Man's Wickedness.

By D. L. HICKOK, D.D., FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CLEVELAND, OHIO.

The stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
—JUDGES v., 20.

In the various contests of the children of Israel with their enemies, nature in many ways seemed to enter the lists and to fight with God's people, and to secure to them the victory. Thus it was that a thunder-storm, or the lightning, or the rapid rise of a river determined the result of the battle. David alludes to something of this kind when he says: "The clouds poured out water, the skies sent out a sound, Thine arrows went abroad, the voice of Thy thunder was in the heaven; the lightnings lightened the world; the earth trembled and

shook." Again, "As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them, and they were smitten before Israel." Sisera was a leader of the enemies of Israel. The story of his death by the hand of a woman is recorded in the previous chapter. The stars in their courses doubtless refers to some heavenly phenomenon, as a storm of wind, rain, hail or lightning. Napoleon once said that "Providence was on the side which had the heaviest battalions," but it was not so in his own case when a Russian winter sent him home in that disastrous retreat from Moscow. If the wind blows in a man's favor, if the snow aids his cause,

if the storm furthers his projects, if the sun shines at his wedding, if nature is propitious, he is pleased to say that providence is on his side; but if all these things are against him, if the stars in their courses seem to be helping the other party, then he is apt to think that the devil is in the wind.

There is, however, a doctrine involved here that is beyond any poetic or private interpretation. To understand God's providences, one must see them at long range. When they are too close we are apt to be too selfish to judge them aright. The thought of the text is that natural law is in alliance with the moral law. Nature in its way antagonizes sin; the great laws of the universe act as barriers against wickedness. It would be impossible for a man to become as wicked as the devil while in the flesh. The principles of self-interest, if nothing else, would restrain men from becoming veritable demons. How often is the injustice of nations restrained toward each other by the laws of political economy. See how the principle known as "the balance of power" saves the petty states of Europe from being swallowed up by their more powerful neighbors. Society, by the very law of self-defence, turns against wickedness which seeks its destruction. To one standing upon the ocean beach and watching the great waves rolling in upon the shore day and night, year after year, it might seem as if the whole continent would eventually be given up to the sea. The reason why the constant incoming waves make no advance is to be found in the "undertow." A man to save himself will seek to punish and prevent crime. Such is the law of independence that men are compelled to limit and circumscribe wrong-doing.

Again, the human constitution is fashioned with fixed limits, beyond which the wicked man cannot go. The flesh is weak and can hold only so much wickedness; a demon in a human body would tear and destroy it. The drunkard can go only so far with his drunkenness. The sensualist finds a limit to vice in his own body. It is recorded of the wicked: "He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the

ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." Such are the laws of nature. Evil shall never become infinite, for sin when it reaches its growth cuts off its own top. It was so with slavery; it will be so with polygamy. Hence, in coming unto the side of God, man comes unto the side of the fighting stars. In taking his stand with eternal truth, he takes his stand on the side of the great laws of nature. When by grace a man is lifted up into the sonship, the sword of law again leaps from its scabbard, but now for his defence; nature again builds her walls about him, not to circumscribe his liberty, but to save him from his enemies. How blessed for the Christian to feel that not only his conscience and the Word of God are for him, but even the world of nature around him. Saved by grace and preserved by law—how safe, how secure!

The Physician and the Remedy.

BY P. S. HENSON, D.D., BAPTIST CHURCH,
CHICAGO.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then, etc.—*JER. viii., 22.*

The condition of Israel represents the condition of the world. The world is diseased. "The whole creation groaneth." Redemption embraces in its purposes the perfection of the globe itself and of our very bodies. Humanity is under a blight of moral disease. The last prescription of man is agnosticism, is ethical culture. God has given a true and good physician, the Lord Jesus Christ.

If the world is not healed, it is not because God has not made adequate provision. "Much more" is the Gospel's gracious word. The Gospel has not lost its grip and power. Earthly remedies have changed—physicians change and diseases change. But the Gospel remedy and physician are forever one. Why then is the world not saved? Because,

I. It will not take the remedy through unwillingness, because it does not understand it and because it sees so many who profess to have taken it who do not appear any better.

II. Because the Gospel is not sent to

men, or if taken it is not carried in faith. Faith is the grace that works wonders.

III. Because of want of proper encompassment of Christian atmosphere. A great deal in the healing of disease depends upon proper atmosphere. So spiritually, make the surroundings of the patient spiritually sanitary so that the remedial effects may not be counteracted.

IV. Because there is the humanitarian idea that the very ignorance of the heathen will work their salvation, and the fatalistic idea that if God wills they can be saved without our aid and *vice versa*. Some also hold that the heathen are not worth saving.

V. The world is not converted because so many people in the Church don't realize the necessity of sending forth the Gospel, and because so many of them do not have faith in the efficacy of the Gospel. It is easy for one here living in a Christian atmosphere to be converted. Let us make conversion easy over there. Let us perfect that atmosphere over on the other side. It can be done. Prayer and faith and work will do it. Great is the cyclone. Beginning in the gulf it grows and spreads till a vast area is covered by its mighty power. Let our prayer become a cyclone. It may soon be noted coming down over there in a cyclone of spiritual power.

The Church the Dispenser of God's Law."

By F. W. CONRAD, D D. (LUTHERAN),
PHILADELPHIA.

And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.—ISAIAH ii., 3.

God is the Creator of the universe, which consists of countless worlds which are controlled by the force of gravitation and fixed and invariable laws. From the centre of the universe went forth these governing laws to control heaven, earth and hell. To sustain and govern, to redeem and magnify man's force a similar law was necessary. That law was truth, which God introduced into the universe. God

was the primary source of truth; the Bible taught and the Church promulgated truth for the governing of the world.

The New Testament dispensation verified the statement in the text, and the law was proclaimed from the churches. At the present time it could not be expected there would come a supernatural direction for the location of a house to be dedicated to the Lord. It must be arranged so as to accommodate the people. It must also be constructed with taste, for it is to be consecrated to the use of the Lord, and must be in some way superior to others, and as costly and beautiful as the congregation could erect. When such a building is obtained, it of itself is of no consequence without a Christian minister, efficient church officers, and bands of active and earnest members. If any of these are wanting in a church it is impossible to win any moral battles. But if these are faithful to their high trust they can accomplish much toward man's highest well-being. The well-being of the community depends on personal conduct toward others, and should the principles of Christianity as unfolded in the Bible be carried out, there would be created a little heaven on earth. Christianity inculcated truth, charity, honesty, industry, frugality and temperance. The true conception of education is found in the Church of Christ, and Christianity has established the highest institutions of learning there are in the world, as well as trained the greatest men of literature.

Thus Christianity is a great school teacher, a patron of arts, science, music, eloquence, in every sense the law of man's highest well-being. Christianity reveals to him the truths of redemption, and no other law could recover his character. The law of the state can restrain or punish, but it can not purify the heart. Thus it is shown that Christianity is the law not only of the well-being of the family, but of the state. God is the author of the essence of government. Man, to make laws properly, would need to be morally perfect. It is a great mistake to think a man's intelligence counted for his virtue. Without the principles of Christianity no government could con-

* Preached at the dedication of a church.

tinue its principles and prosper. Let America multiply her houses of worship, inculcate righteousness and loyalty among her people. No congregation could be engaged in more noble work than furnishing houses in which to worship God.

The Pattern in the Mount.

BY CHARLES H. PARKHURST, D.D.
(PRESBYTERIAN), N. Y.

And look that thou make them after their pattern which was shewed thee in the Mount.—Exod. xxv., 40.

Moses did his work from a plan and did not get his plan from his work. Reality is prior to the shows of itself. There are no planless seeds. A far-reaching plan is the best one. Calculation is better than caprice. We are wiser in the long reach of thought than in the short reach. We are lost in the woods because we have no room for a long look. You say life is short. Better live on the short arc of a long circle than describe a little circle with the same line. Immediate results are meagre results. Plan solidifies. Power is measurable by purpose. Shiftlessness is a name for aimlessness. To-morrow depends on to-day, but to-day depends on to-morrow also. Past and present sustain each other. Plan gives moral safeguard. Adam fell because he had nothing to do, and the first act in the redemptive scheme was to set him to work. Satan recruits his ranks from the vagrants. The Apostles were working men. The drifting boat drifts down stream. Young aimlessness is the beginning of old iniquity. Employment is a subsidiary means of conversion. Character, purpose and apprenticeship are not far apart. Moses brought down his pattern from the Mount. There is a celestial way of doing earthly things. Earthly success is a quotation from overhead. Our ideals are from patterns in the Mount. There is something in them we never put into them. Whence are our ideals? We have never seen a perfect thing. What do we mean by using the word? We must go with Moses to the Mount for the answer. In nothing do men have so much faith as in their ideals, and there is nothing which it is so hard to explain. We do not make laws, but find them. We cannot

enact truth any more than gravity. There may be a myth about Sinai, but it is one we were bound to invent if it never was reality. The problem of life is to make the ideal real. Once it was done in Galilee. The two meet in Jesus.

The White-Robed Throng.

BY REV. T. W. MEDHURST (BAPTIST),
PORTSMOUTH, ENGLAND.

What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?—REV. vii., 13.

They who are now glorified before the Eternal Throne were once sinners on earth, even as we now are. They are in Heaven by the grace of God which was manifested towards them, even as it is manifested towards us if we are believers in the Lord Jesus.

I. What they were once. They were children of wrath even as others. Condemned by God's holy law, they were fallen, guilty, depraved creatures.

II. What they are now. Redeemed, justified, renewed, quickened together with Christ, raised up, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places.

III. Why they are there. Not on account of their own strength, worthiness, or righteousness. God by His power has formed them for Himself, and therefore they show forth His praise. God has displayed in their salvation the freeness, the power, and the fulness of His own grace, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards them by Christ Jesus. By the grace of God the glorified are what they are in the presence of Jesus. By that same grace we who are sinners may become like unto them. Have we a good hope of being one day partakers of the Christian's blessedness? Let us ascertain our real condition with respect to that eternity, on the verge of which we are even now standing. Have we a title and a meetness for the Heavenly world?

The Attraction.

It is not weariness of life

That makes us wish to die;

But we are drawn by cords which come
From out eternity.

—T. W. Faber, D.D. (*Episcopal*).

ILLUSTRATED PREACHING.

By S. C. WISHARD, D.D. (PRESBYTERIAN), Ky.

There is a kind of preaching in which the preacher does all the thinking for his audience. He becomes a sort of labor-saving machine, and when the machine begins to play, the people have only to sit and look on to see how it is done. There is another kind of preaching that makes the audience think, and makes thinking a pleasure. Beyond that, it leads the people into communion with God in His living Word, which is worship. For preaching that only makes people think has accomplished only its preparatory work. It has taken the first step only. Thinking that stops short of securing the appropriation of the truth, stops short of the end for which men hear the Gospel. The preaching, therefore, that puts the truth down into the life of the hearer, that so wakes him up to hungering and thirsting that he eats and drinks the truth, will accomplish the end of all preaching.

In order to this, the truth must be preached, not dreams or fancies or theories, but truth. But how? Without answering that question exhaustively, let the importance of illustrated preaching be considered. By this it is not meant that one should carry his book of illustrations with him, and, at stated intervals, select out a given quantity of the same. Illustrations in preaching, to be worth anything, must be born, born at home, out of the subject. They cannot be spliced on, but should come forth living, flashing light upon the truth. They are the children of mental and moral heat. They come forth when the mind is so warmed up with the truth that it cannot be content with the ordinary cold statement of it. An illustration presupposes there is a point to be made more lucid by the flash of a side light on some obscure angle of the subject.

An illustration that conceals or demolishes the point, had better not be used. It should never be allowed to interrupt the impetuous flow of the argument, nor dull the grappling points of the logic. The mind of an audience should not be delayed,

but quickened in its movements to the conclusion. The right sort of illustration will add momentum and velocity to mental action. It is a good thing to know just how daintily to handle the illustrative brush, so as not to waste time or material. An apt illustration is good to stick a thought fast, but too much of it is more than you want.

Where shall we find our illustrations? As said, they must come warm and living through our own mental processes. But whence? Shall they be historical, scientific, or what? One thing, they should be near at hand, not "far-fetched." The design of an illustration should not be to exhibit the extensive research of the speaker, but to help the hearer to a better understanding of the truth, and a more permanent hold upon it. Hence it should be familiar to the minds of the hearers; if not, it cannot illustrate, but adds to the bewilderment of the hearer. We once heard a minister preach an elaborate sermon, touched up with illustrations from chemistry and astronomy, to a backwoods audience. There were not four persons in the audience who had ever seen the inside of a book on chemistry or astronomy. The illustrations did not illustrate. The preacher might as well have piled in a few problems from Euclid.

Our Saviour garnished His matchless discourses by drawing His illustrations from things at hand, things familiar: "Behold the lilies." "A sower went forth to sow" was probably spoken in sight of a man who was scattering the seed. "The hairs of your head," "the sparrows," the "sheep fallen into a pit," "if ye being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children;" all these, and a thousand more, were familiar things immediately at hand. He never fished up an illustration out of a deep pond, nor brought one down from the unknown blue above. The stars spoke for Him, the earth had ten thousand tongues, and the deep uttered her voice; but it was in familiar lesson, not

in mystery. He took the things familiar to the common people. He did not go to the heathen classics, but to the sacred classics of Israel, with which the people were familiar.

The Scriptures themselves surpass all other sources of illustration. We sometimes hear ministers parading the old heathen classics, of which nine-tenths of their audiences never read a word. A brother recently wrote several articles on the importance of reading history for the purpose of getting illustrations for the pulpit. Well, it is delightful to know history, to know what God has done in the earth. It would be well enough for the preacher to read up, if the perishing ones to whom he brings the message of life were familiar with these things; but they are not, with rare exceptions, and will not be—life is too short. But there is one Book with which they must be familiar. That Book contains such poetry, history, biography, logic, eloquence and ethics as men need to know. They must know the things in that Book. For this one pur-

pose do we—ministers and people—live and toil. In this Book are such incidents of life and experience; such revelations of God and of human character in all its relations to Him; such touches of humor, wit, pathos, argument, love, heroism, sublime courage and endurance for God; such reaches of thought, so grand yet so simple and commanding, that one who turns from it to secular sources for illustration, has weakened himself by as much as the human falls below the divine. It is to be remembered also that Bible illustrations are themselves the sword of the Spirit; further, they attract the people, help them, illuminate their hearts and lives. There is no light like the light of God's Word. Every theme that bears in the slightest degree upon human hopes and life, can be made radiant with these gleams of light from the throne. The preacher who knows how to illustrate his subjects from the Word of God will not lack for an audience, neither will his preaching be without results. For "the entrance of Thy words giveth light."

PREACHING TO THE CONSCIENCE.

PROF. T. W. HUNT, PH.D. (PRESBY'N), COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY, PRINCETON, N. J.

It may safely be affirmed that the impression of the conscience is one of the main objects of the preaching of the Gospel and one of the main tests of its successful presentation. "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." How significantly such an order of preaching is brought to light in Scripture and in the history of the Church! The Word of God is said to be "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It is a trumpet sounding out its warning voice so loudly that above the highest din and roar of worldliness it must be heard. It is a light full-orbed and searching, entering every nook and corner of the spiritual nature, and bringing hidden things to the surface. So did

John the Baptist preach to the licentious Herod, until his secret sins stood forth in noon-day clearness. So did Paul preach to Felix till he trembled, and to Agrippa till he confessed to the excellency of Christianity. It was thus that Peter preached to the multitudes at Pentecost, till they were "pricked in their hearts," and cried aloud for the mercy of God. So did Christ himself preach to Scribes and Pharisees, in behalf of accused innocence until being convicted in their own consciences, they went out from His presence "one by one beginning at the eldest even unto the last." It was after this intrepid manner that the reformers preached to princes and worldly prelates against their personal sins. So thundered the lion-hearted Luther in the presence of German barons. So preached the earnest Edwards right straight home to the innermost consciences of men with such power

and solemnity that they even violated the order of divine worship by their responses to his faithful words. It was the signal glory of the great French preachers of the seventeenth century that when at other European courts, the royal ear was filled with ill-timed eulogiums, these courageous men stood up at the very centre of Parisian profligacy and warned the Grand Monarch and his courtiers against prevailing sins. This and this only is the spirit that must mark the modern ministry. In these days when the time-serving temper is in the very house of God and the "Bondage of the Pulpit" is no misnomer, nothing less will do than a Pauline faithfulness and a Puritan incisiveness—an order of discourse that will make it impossible for any sinful hearer to live on good terms with his conscience. When bad men are at ease in their sins and good men are becoming carnal, there is something more demanded than a soothing or sentimental type of preaching by which the most telling truths of Scripture are modified to meet the preferences of the most indifferent hearer. As the spirit of worldliness is the natural fruit of a sluggish moral sense, so is it through the profound awakening of the moral convictions of the people that the redemptive

purposes of God are to be realized. If the preaching of the time is to meet the requirements of the time, it must be from the conscience to the conscience, penetrating and pungent, searching as the light, and breaking in pieces as the hammer of God, all that is callous. It must burn its way as a fire from heaven through all dross and defilement. Its language must be plain and telling; its method direct and personal; its injunctions final; its great ambition the saving of souls; its one authority the Word of God, and its court of appeal the judgment seat of Christ. Such is the desperate depravity of the natural heart, such the indifference of men to the truth, and such the debasing of moral standards as the world goes on that if men are to be saved by the ordinance of preaching, that preaching must be awakening rather than appeasing, spiritual and scriptural rather than æsthetic, taking right hold with a giant's grasp of the will and conscience of men. It is of conscience that the old English dramatist is speaking when he says, "that the priests of God, if effective in their service, must make their pulpits ring and the aisles of their churches ring with that round word."

IDOLS IN THE PULPIT.

REV. F. PIRACX, PERE (EVANGELICAL), LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND.

Why is preaching often followed by such poor results? Who is to blame? Perhaps everybody.

Remember, the preacher has before him a very mixed audience. A select number of his hearers, perhaps, do not go with the multitude, but the rest are afflicted with avarice and pride, with envy and jealousy; many are slanderers, some are intemperate, lustful, or indifferent, and then there are the merely orthodox people, further off from the kingdom of God than all the rest. With such a congregation is it to be wondered at if sermons are followed by small results?

On the other hand, the non-success of the pulpit may be the fault of the min-

ister. Instead of attaching the blame to his people, he should perhaps turn to himself, and there see the reason why his harangues fall powerless on the great mass of indifferent hearers. Has he not often got Rachel's box of idols with him in the pulpit? If so, how can his ministry be blessed? What power can he have over souls when he urges on them a faith he does not possess, a self-denial he does not practice, Christian virtues which he fails to illustrate? He may even grow vehement, but he will not convince, even though he be the most orthodox of the orthodox. The Word of Life falling from his lips will be like Elisha's staff in the hands of Gehazi. The staff was laid on the face of

the dead child, "but there was neither voice nor hearing."

Idols! where is the pulpit in which they are not to be found? Theophilus has a crowded church, being possessed of exceptional gifts. But when he casts forth his net over his hearers, does he draw it back full of great and small fish? No, it is empty. As he descends from the pulpit he hopes to hear it said that he never preached better in his life. Praise is his favorite idol.

Brethren! we have the hardest of all tasks to fulfil. Our opponent is sin—that weapon of hell; but we may wield another that is mightier—grace. God will only furnish us with this, however, on condition of our leaving all our idols, even the smallest, behind us, as we ascend the pulpit. Then we shall not fight an unequal fight with sin; then we shall know how churches are revived, and deserts turned into a fruitful field.

Having reached the last stage in my career, with what bitter regret I look back, and see that too often I have made my pulpit like Rachel's box. Those accursed idols have paralyzed my strength.

But I know also that when I have shaken myself free of them my ministry has been abundantly blessed; and this is my consolation in my old age. Let me tell you of one instance.

Some years since a pastor wrote and said that a movement was beginning in his church, and he wanted me to go and preach there—a fresh voice would do good. I started, but when at some distance from his parish my conscience suddenly awoke. "Wretched man," it said, "what are you going to do in that church? Preach to others, when you ought rather to preach to yourself? Have you given your own heart to God? No, for you have not given Him an idol that you love better than Himself; go back." I was about to do this, when suddenly, making a violent effort, I said, "Lord, here is my idol, I sacrifice it to Thee." Immediately deliverance came. Profound joy filled my soul. I was a different man. I ascended the pulpit, and for a week proclaimed the counsel of God. A great revival resulted, and that church became one of the most flourishing through the Christian life of its members.

PREACHING, EVANGELICAL AND PRACTICAL.

BY BISHOP WM. PAKENHAM WALSH, D.D., OSSORY, IRELAND.

We hear a great many complaints now—lays concerning "the decadence of preaching." With much that is said upon that subject I entirely disagree. A great deal of the fault-finding arises from the fact that the world is not content with the old truths, but craves for a new gospel, fashioned after its own unhealthy fancies. To this morbid appetite I trust the Church of God will never pander. The old truths must be preached, the old Gospel must be preached, and this without stint or compromise—Christ and Him crucified; Christ and Him glorified; Christ, the only and sufficient sacrifice; Christ, our grand and great exemplar; the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the author and finisher of our own and other people's faith. But may we not preach old truths with fire and freshness? Is it necessary, is it desirable, that the

preacher should always iterate his message in the same stale words? Are there no new illustrations, no new surroundings, no new adaptations of the ancient verity which might attest at once its unchangeableness and yet its suitability to man's ever-varying need? I hear of sermons sometimes, though it is not my bad fortune to listen to them, which are perfectly true, orthodox in every line, correct in every statement, but they seem to have no more relation to the hearers than they might have to the inhabitants of some distant planet. They do not grapple with men's fears, or hopes, or doubts, or difficulties; they do not strike home to men's consciences or men's hearts; they seem to be lacking in earnestness and love; they want the enthusiasm which is natural to truth when it is felt as well as believed by him who deliv-

ers it, and it is no wonder if such sermons fail to arrest attention or to force home conviction. There is often another weak point in our pulpit ministrations. We forget that men require not only a Gospel in the faith of which they can die, but a Gospel in the strength and teaching of which they can live. They want guidance amidst the world's snares and temptations, and they want instruction and support amidst its duties and its cares. Why not teach and preach, as St Paul did, about

relative duties and correlative relations? Why not pass on, as he did in his wonderful epistles, from the grace of Christ and the all-sufficiency of His salvation, to the duties of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants? Surely we may be evangelical and at the same time practical; we can be orthodox and at the same time fervent; and if we were, there would be fewer complaints either about the coldness of the pulpit or its want of adaptation to the necessities of the age.

THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF THE PULPIT.

By JOSEPH PARKER, D.D. (INDEPENDENT), LONDON.

I do not separate myself from my brethren when I advise that the pulpit should be reserved for distinctly doctrinal and ethical teaching. I am not conscious of being narrow-minded in wishing to consecrate the pulpit, wholly and absolutely, to the preaching of the Gospel. Men do not come to church to adjust controversies, to re-arrange the states and empires, or settle the details of regeneration; they come to worship God, and to hear what God the Lord will say. There is no true reform outside the supposed boundaries of the Church which is not inspired and nourished by the biblical teaching of an enlightened and unencumbered pulpit, so no man need suppose that he has cut himself adrift from the spirit of the age by confining his Church ministry to the worship of God and the exposition of the Scriptures. We wrong the Scriptures when we suppose that they do not touch every point of time, every phase of iniquity, every form of need. Preach, "As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," and you have struck at all oppression, monopoly, unjust dealing, and

sharp practice, though you may not so much as name them. Preach, "There is one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus," and you have pronounced the doom of all reverends, and right reverends, and most reverends; all hierarchies, and prelacies, and popies, that thrust themselves between the soul and God, and yet not one of them in this case also may have been so much as named. Preach, "who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God: angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him," and you preach the ultimate extinction of all majesties, highnesses, sovereignties, thrones, and crowns, that are not held in trust from heaven; all kings that are not the subjects of their own people, and all churches that have any head but Christ, though no reference in particular may have been made to one of them. This is the glory of the Scriptures, that they hold in their infinite meaning all the wants and prayers of the ages; and this is the glory of the preacher, that he need not name Drusilla in order to make Felix tremble.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY.

The annual sermon was delivered before the Institute in St. Thomas' Church, perhaps the most elegant edifice of the Episcopal body in this city, on Sabbath evening the 18th of January, in the presence

of a large and cultivated assembly. The sermon was preached by Rt. Rev. Samuel S. Harris, Bishop of Michigan, and was a very fine and dignified discourse from Gen. i., 26, 27. Bishop Harris dealt

in a spirit at once friendly and fearless with the most advanced scientific views, while he developed very forcibly and ably the doctrines of man's spiritual nature and necessities, both for this life and that to come. Assistant Bishop Henry C. Potter of New York presided, and followed the sermon with remarks expressing his interest in the Institute and its work, and his hearty desire to co-operate with it. Altogether the gathering was a very gratifying one to all who were present.

The regular meetings of the Institute, which are held on the first Thursday of every month, are increasing in attendance and interest. At the meeting in January, F. Cope Whitehouse, M.A., presented some new and convincing views regarding the Israelites in Egypt. His subject was "The Recent Explorations in the Fayoum and Original Surveys, with the Arabic Traditions of the Canal of the Patriarch Joseph, and the Situation of the Land of Goshen." Mr. Whitehouse's familiarity with that part of Egypt which is called the Fayoum, and with which he is acquainted more thoroughly than is any other white man, gives great authority to his statements.

Prof. Francis Brown, of Union Theological Seminary, addressed the Institute at its meeting in February on "Our Knowledge and our Guesses about the Hittites." The learned lecturer very clearly spread before his hearers the present state of our knowledge regarding this people, of whom little is recorded in history, but which little implies so much; the remains of whose buildings and inscriptions, also, tell a tale of a mighty people passed away leaving no historical record.

An appeal has reached the Institute from Japan. It will be remembered last summer a fund was raised which enabled the Institute to send five hundred copies of *Christian Thought* to India to be circulated there by Baboo Ram Chandra Bose among young Hindus. News of this has reached Japan and a missionary writes from there saying that immense changes are taking place there, which will land a large part of the young men in either Christianity or atheism. Such literature as that published by the Institute of Philosophy will meet a pressing want. The Institute will forward promptly all for which friends of the cause will furnish the means.

CHRISTIAN EDIFICATION

Solomon's Downward Course.

By JOHN HALL, D.D. (PRESBY'N), N. Y.

Solomon allowed himself to be betrayed into grave and false steps. Look at the way by which he was led astray.

He was a great and powerful king. There never had been any king like him. He inherited the glory of David, and shared the natural advantages which accrued from the course David pursued. All the kings round about were on good terms with him. Nothing succeeds like success. They all paid court to him. Hiram rendered substantial service to him, and Hiram made overtures to him as to the marrying of his daughter. There were many things he could plead in his favor. He could say, "It is true, my father would not have owned these things, but he had not the advan-

tages I have. He was a shepherd-boy; I am a king's son; his range of thought was narrow compared with mine. His circumstances were not mine; my circumstances justify me in doing what I have done; for my father might have done the same if he were in my circumstances."

You can see how he would make out his case in such circumstances. What reason was there to hold up Israel as a contracted people, and making that little strip of land look as if it were a part of Heaven? Why not be catholic, be humanitarian, or cosmopolitan, and make all these nations feel they can make alliances with us? So from one step he goes to another.

He has taken one step, and must needs go farther. He had brought these princesses from their father's house, and from

the gods they had worshipped, and they could not worship amongst a foreign people. Then he would proceed to argue that any worship is better than none at all, and no doubt about it there are many attractive things in the worship of the Zidonians. They have some beautiful views of the Deity; they take art and incorporate it with their worship. Altogether there is much about it that is to be commended. And besides all that, these women are princesses. I have brought them here, and when once one gets her temple erected here, why not all? So the temples are built, and priests are procured to officiate in them.

Now he must needs go a little farther. It does seem selfish and very exclusive and sectarian for me to keep to my temple, and let them go to theirs. So when a fascinating and favorite wife beseeches him that he will for once go with her to the temple of Ashtoreth, he went with her, and was fascinated with the picture of the pagan rites. They gratified and satisfied a licentious man like him. So when he went with her he very soon went with them all. So from little beginnings you here see a king, sent to rule over a nation consecrated to the one Jehovah, becoming a fellow-worshipper, with strange women, of strange gods.

I can understand arguments that might be presented for this policy: It is not wise to present religion in its narrowest aspect. It is better to be broad-minded. If I go a little with them they may come with me. It is by meeting them half-way that I shall win them to my religion.

A thousand sophistries of that kind can be brought to bear upon religion in that way. So he gave his sanction to this idolatry, and worked an abomination in the sight of God.

No wonder the Lord was angry with Solomon. So the evil day came, as it always does sooner or later. God is patient and long-suffering, and slow to wrath; judgment is His strange work. As has been often said, justice walks as if she were lame, but it comes sooner or later. It comes in fitting ways public and open. As the sin was open, so God expresses His displeasure openly, and punishes Solomon and his household in an open manner.

There are many lessons of a general kind which lie upon the surface of this narrative which seem to bear upon ourselves, and ought to be learned by us as not in the least degree unsuitable to our conditions and circumstances. The poet has well described New York of to-day, when he said that "when wealth accumulates men decay." That truth finds its illustration in all prosperous communities. When men get wealth they can afford to be idle, so they indulge themselves in things which their fathers would have deprecated, and justify their deeds by their circumstances, and draw about themselves a flimsy cordon of sophistry and talk about the advance of humanity and liberal thought, when it is nothing after all but a preference for individual license. I know that there are some to whom the world, the flesh, and the devil have whispered: This is old world narrowness. These are Puritan words, Presbyterian doctrine; this is not for our time, and for our city, and our circumstances. But, call it by what name you will, it is the thing for all times, cities, and circumstances.

There was put into my hand lately a printed circular, written by a clergyman of this city on the text, "Your house is left unto you desolate." It was by the pastor of St. Bartholomew's, and it contains a clear statement of things, which for many years I have been trying to tell. It is fair to presume that he knew what he was writing about, when he pointed out the dangers from ungodliness among those who have abundant leisure and chance for self-improvement. He struck hard and well-merited blows against the sins of society. There he showed that there was an almost universal disregard of the Sabbath. Saturday festivities were carried far on into the regular day of rest, and then came a carelessness about getting to the House of God. The children were permitted to omit attendance at the Sunday-school. Foreign travel had brought to our city much that was bad in foreign life and a pitiable imitation of foreign ways. There were Sunday driving and Sunday parties and Sunday evening receptions. There is a rush for the road on Sunday afternoons; but it is the road to hell! Bad allian-

ces are formed, loveless and scandalous, only to be followed by domestic misery and criminal separations, such as is best described by that text, "Your house is left unto you desolate."

These utterances are not Puritan or Presbyterian narrowness. I wish they had been spoken years ago, and shouted from every pulpit in the land. They come too late; still they may do good to multitudes by holding them back from the paths of the destroyer, for it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of an angry God.

You may say, Why speak of these things to us, when only recently we entered into covenant with God to keep His laws? But so did Solomon. It is because we are human nature, readily tempted with multifarious temptations, that I utter these words of warning; and some may laugh at

them, and be indignant at me. Take care of the first false step, for it inevitably necessitates and seems to justify the second. Remember, it is not yet too late to stop and pause on the downward path, to see after all whether false logic can take the place of a comforting and consoling faith in God.

Are there any who are conscious that they are going wrong? If so, put your trust in Jesus; call Him "Master;" trust Him as your Redeemer; take Him as your Shepherd, for He restoreth the soul: come to Him; beg His forgiveness; ask Him to take you by the hand; commit yourselves to Him, body, soul, means, leisure, and resources, everything commit to God. It can be positively done; and pray God to bless these truths to every one, and to His name be the glory.

— Helps in Pastoral Work —

The Matchless Preacher.

BY BISHOP W. BOYD CARPENTER (EPISCOPAL), RIPON, ENGLAND.

Christ knew what was in man. He knew that love alone could find its way to some consciences. More mighty than the repellent looks, the proud scorn, or the stern denunciation of the scribe or chief priests, were those simple words which told a tired heart and a long-stained conscience that there was a rest and a welcome for the most fallen.

He knew what was in man; but this knowledge never led to any over-anxiety to justify His words to those who were too heart-sodden to receive them. He taught them without seeking to enforce His utterances by reference to the authority of learned doctors or reverend rabbis. The authority of truth was with Him. There was no need of an apologetic tone. The truth stated would commend itself to men's consciences. Wisdom would be justified of her children.

In one sense this manner of authority belonged to Him alone who was the wisdom of God.

But there is a lesson which it may afford to all teachers—the lesson of trust in the power of truth to do its own work. The weapon which the preacher wields is prepared by Him who understands the conflict. "There is," says a modern writer, "a certain trust in God's Word that truth shall do its work in the hearts of men, which every preacher needs to make him a man of power. It is an equable and joyous trust. It is a spirit of repose in the *destiny* of the instrument which God has chosen. Once possessed of it, and *by* it, a preacher feels that he can afford to preach truth truthfully." This spirit of repose is pre-eminently seen in the words and teaching of Jesus Christ. "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." "He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone." "If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" "He that is of God heareth God's words." It is confidence in the truth which can give this spirit of repose; and it is precisely this confidence which is often wanting in teachers. Yet it should not be wanting. If what is preached is true, and the truth, then have we not reason to believe that it must ac-

comply its end? The Gospel is fitted to the heart of man. There is a correlation between the Word of God and the spirit of man, just as there is between the works of God and the nature of man. This fitness has been recognized by various minds. "I believe this book to be God's book, because it is man's book," wrote one who

"Faced the spectres of the mind,
And laid them."

To win this spirit of confidence one thing alone is needed. It is intensity of personal conviction of the truth. This is the secret of power; and it points the practical application, which the example of Christ so powerfully enforces, to give ourselves unto prayer, as well as the ministry of the Word. "Rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

SUNDAY SCHOOL CAUSE

LIGHT ON THE INTERNATIONAL LESSONS.

BY JOSEPH SANDERSON, D.D., NEW YORK.

April 5,

Paul's Voyage.—ACTS xxvii., 1, 2, 14-26.

1885.

Paul has appealed to Cæsar and must be sent to Rome. This is a part of a great plan of God. The apostle is at Cæsarea and about twenty days are occupied in preparation for the voyage.

I. The embarkation for Rome. Vs. 1, 2. The authorities determined that the apostle should go to Italy by sea. Luke, who wrote the Acts, was likely his companion on this voyage. Other prisoners of a criminal stripe were also on the vessel. All were under the supervision of Julius, a centurion, who showed good traits of character in his treatment of Paul. Paul was a passenger on three ships before he reached Italy. The first was a vessel of Adramyttium, a port of Asia Minor. Aristarchus, a fellow-laborer of Paul's (Philem. 24), was also on board. Luke and Aristarchus were great comforts and helps to Paul the prisoner. Thus God provides.

II. The voyage. Vs. 3-13. Trace the voyage on the map. They sail along the southern coast of Asia Minor. On the right were the mountains of Paul's native place and on the left was the island where he first went as a missionary. At Myra they took passage in a grain ship from Egypt bound for Rome. It was late in the season when they reached the Fairhavens, where Paul advised them to winter (vs. 9-11), but they disregarded his advice and met a terrible storm. All brought out Paul's character and God's plans.

III. The storm. Vs. 14-20. Man proposes, but God disposes and changes

man's course. "Stormy winds fulfil his word." The captain gave up his attempt to sail in his proposed course and let the ship scud before the wind, which she did for about twenty-three miles, till she came under the lee of the little island of Clauda. Here the ship's boat which had been in tow was taken on board with difficulty. They passed cables under the keel, round the hull and fastened them on deck. A storm-sail was set, and thus prepared, the ship drifted about thirty-six miles in twenty-four hours, and in a little over thirteen days probably, came to the Island of Malta. How God's power is manifested in the sea! All that the sailors could do seemed valueless. They cast overboard tackling, freight, utensils, bedding, out of sheer necessity, because of the urgency of the danger. What a sad plight to be in—no means of ascertaining where they were, hope expiring and the foundering of the ship imminent.

IV. God present in the storm. Vs. 21-26. Abstinence from food had been caused partly by their fears and dejection of mind. In this extremity Paul's faith shone forth. He addressed all on board, reminded them of his former advice, and of harm to their persons and loss to their property by disregarding it. But with brave, calm confidence assures them now there will be no loss of life. God's angel had told him this during the previous night. Paul was dear to God as His servant and apostle and, for Paul's sake, God saved all on that ship. God also had promised Paul that he should preach in

Rome, and therefore he would be preserved. The apostle's exhortation is Christian: "Be of good cheer." Paul had interceded for both himself and all on board. God heard, answered by an

angel and revealed somewhat of the future. God is in every storm in our lives—this should comfort us. *Our faith will comfort many. One godly man saves many ungodly ones* (Gen. xviii., 22-33).

April 12,

Paul's Shipwreck.—ACTS xxvii., 27-44.

1895.

After fourteen days of storm, Paul and those on shipboard with him were nearing land and it was now midnight.

I. A night of anxiety. Vs. 27-29. The sound of the breakers probably warned the sailors of their nearness to land. This was St. Paul's Bay in Malta. The lead was heaved and the depth found one hundred and twenty feet and heaved again and found ninety feet. Lest they should be driven on shore, they anchored and waited for the light of day.

II. New help and comfort from Paul. Vs. 30-38. The sailors knowing that two hundred and seventy-six persons—the number on board—could not get into the boat, they were preparing to leave, under the pretext that they were casting anchors. Paul saw through their selfish scheme and had the bravery to announce the fact to the centurion who had the power to thwart it. The lives of all had been given by God to Paul (v. 24), and Paul had the right to state the conditions on which the salvation of their lives depended. These sailors knew how to manage the ship—the soldiers did not. Both the sailors and soldiers were selfish (vs. 30-42). The soldiers foiled the sailors' scheme by cutting the boat's rope, so that it would drift away. Now self-interest would mass all on board to take measures for self-preservation. Paul's Christianity led him to give advice for the body's comfort (v. 23). All on board had fasted long, endured much; daylight was approaching, when they would need all their strength for the discharge of their new duties, and now he exhorts them to eat—their strength must be kept up, and for their comfort he again assures that the slightest harm would not befall any one. He sets them the example—took bread—gave thanks to God, thus confessing his religion before men, acknowledging his dependence on God for

preservation and sustenance. "Grace" before meals is here taught. The effect of Paul's example was electric. All were cheered and took refreshments. Keep in good company. Paul's influence continued to increase. The writer of this book probably counted the company when they were all eating together at this time and found there were two hundred and seventy-six in all. When all were satisfied, they resumed their work with renewed activity, threw overboard everything that would hinder the ship from getting as close as possible to land, which in the morning light was now visible.

III. The morning of deliverance. Vs. 39-44. The place appeared strange to the sailors, probably seldom, if ever, visited by them before, but they saw there was a bay with a beach and on that beach they determined if possible to run their vessel. They got rid of the anchors, fixed the rudders, hoisted the sail that was most useful in driving the ship forward, and so hoped to run the ship aground with safety. But owing to the peculiar nature of the channel, the depth of the water and the tenacity of clay underneath, the ship's fore part soon was stuck fast, while her stern was exposed to the force of the waves. Here was another difficulty and the soldiers now showed their selfishness (v. 42). It would have been a horrible thing to kill on a shipwrecked vessel so near land those whom God had so far rescued. V. 43. Paul's wisdom, humanity and influence are seen again in the centurion's management and command. Everything that could be used was seized to float the passengers ashore, and so a motley group of nearly three hundred stood at last on the beach, nearly altogether wrecked but now altogether saved. Happy they who reach, even thus, the shores of heaven.

April 19,

Paul Going to Rome.—ACTS xxviii., 1-15.

1895.

Paul's shipwreck on the Island of Malta occurred about November 1st, A.D. 60. He remained, it is supposed, on the Island till February 8th, A.D. 61, the time when navigation opened.

I. The wrecked sailors on shore. Vs. 1, 2. The island upon which these shipwrecked ones found themselves was Melita, now called Malta, near the middle of the Mediterranean between Europe and

Africa. It is seventeen miles long, nine miles wide, sixty miles in circumference; then ruled by the Romans, now by the British. The natives, although called "Barbarians" by the Greeks and Romans, extended great kindness to the poor, cold, and almost famished and wrecked company. They showed no distinction. Common humanity got the victory over differences of rank or race. Their kindness was adapted to their needs—"a fire" for their cold. Opportunities for doing good come to all.

II. Paul bitten by a viper. Vs. 3-6. Paul helped; was the servant of all; gathered sticks—no meanness in honest or kindly service. The viper probably was in a torpid state till it felt the heat. The terror of the natives at the sight witnesses to its poisonous character. Their conclusion about Paul shows that we should be slow to form judgments based upon mere appearances. These barbarians reasoned from principles embedded in the hearts of all men by nature, that there is a God of justice who punishes the guilty. But *every* calamity is not a judgment for some particular sin. Often it is a discipline. Paul was quite composed—shook the viper off without sustaining any hurt. Mark xvi., 18. God either keeps evil away or compels it to work out good. The incident produced a marked change in the natives' opinion of Paul. They now said he was a God. God was with him indeed. He was a man of God. This incident of the viper, like a church bell, attracted men to the Master Paul served, and to the Gospel he preached.

III. Miraculous healings by Paul. Vs. 7-10. The British governor of the island lives now in a house on an eminence about five miles from this place and commands a view of it. Paul, Luke, and the centurion Julius were probably entertained by Publius, then governor. This governor's father had a complication of serious diseases which are still common on the island. Paul repaid the governor's kindness by restoring

his father to health. He showed the people by his prayer that the healing power came from God. God, by this miracle of healing, furnished Paul with the best credentials. The fame of the miracle spread, and the sick on the island were brought to Paul and he healed them all. Thus God makes opportunities for the spread of His own Gospel. Courtesies, hospitalities, gifts and honors were bestowed upon these guests and upon all through Paul. Publius set the example which was followed by all.

IV. The journey toward Rome resumed. Vs. 11-15. Three months were thus spent on this island—winter months. A vessel from Alexandria which had wintered in that bay now proceeded on her journey. On this ship all embarked again. It had heathen symbols on its prow. Thus an Egyptian ship with heathen symbols is bearing the preachers of the Gospel to Rome. On their way the ship stopped at Syracuse, the capital of Sicily, for three days. Tradition says Paul preached the Gospel there. From Syracuse they made a circuit—the meaning here of "compass"—to catch the breeze, and touched at Reggio, a place about eighty miles from Syracuse. The wind now changed in their favor and brought them to Puteoli, on the north-west corner of the Bay of Naples. There was a Christian church with whose members they remained seven days, enjoying their sympathy, hospitality, and encouragement. Then they proceeded to Rome, one hundred and forty miles distant. The Appian Way on which they travelled was the oldest and most noted of the Roman roads, and was built three centuries before Christ. The brethren in Rome heard of his arrival—came to meet him about forty miles from Rome. This greatly encouraged Paul, who gave thanks to God. The apostle, although a prisoner, is among friends now, who are sympathetic, faithful and will be his co-workers in Rome. Safe in Rome. Thanks.

April 26,

Paul at Rome.—ACTS xxviii., 16-31.

1885.

Paul arrived at Rome about the 1st of March, A.D. 61, and remained there two years. He is about fifty-nine years of age.

I. The arrival at Rome. V. 16. Paul was probably the first of the apostles who trod the streets of Rome. The centurion who had charge of him on the journey delivered him to the commander of the

troops who guarded the Emperor's person—Burhus by name—one of the few good statesmen of that corrupt age.

He was permitted to dwell in a house privately where he could meet friends and preach the Gospel, but was chained to a soldier. To this chain he often makes allusion in his epistles.

II. Paul's first interview with Jews.

Vs. 17-22. Three days were taken to getting "settled," etc., and to have intercourse with special friends. Then he invites the principal Jews in Rome to his lodging. He was anxious to remove their prejudices against him, and to preach the Gospel first to them, in hopes that some of them would become Christians. His address was fraternal and exculpatory. He vindicated his course, showing that it was not anti-Jewish, and the Roman governors before whom he had been accused had united in pronouncing him innocent. He shows that he had not accused his nation of anything, and had only appealed to Cæsar to save himself from judicial murder. This was the reason he was in Rome; and now among his countrymen he desired to have this interview and explain matters to them. He is no apostate or traitor, but for believing in the Hope of Israel, the Messiah, he had been bound with "this chain." The reply of the Jews (v. 21) shows that they understood his position exactly. They had neither received letters of accusation nor personal charges. They however expressed a desire for information. The Christians were called a "sect," and whispered calumnies were being circulated about them. The best things are often spoken against.

III. Paul's second interview with the Jews. Vs. 23-29. A large number on an appointed day came to his lodging, to whom he explained the Scriptures about the promised Messiah and gave his own experience. Two ways of leading men to Christ. He placed the statements of the Law and the Prophets side by side with

Christ's life and death, etc., and showed how they tallied. The entire day was spent in this interview. The results were different then and are so still. The sun melts the wax and hardens the clay. Non-belief is sin. There was a division among the hearers and Paul declares that in that division Isaiah's prophecy (vi., 9, 10) was fulfilled. This passage occurs six times in the New Testament. It means many hear but do not understand the real meaning and power of the Word, because they are so stupid and foolish in mind that they do not perceive the pure spiritual principles of the Gospel. Sin is often represented as a disease, and the recovery from sin a *healing*. If some men are irreclaimable, that is no reason why others should be denied the Gospel. The Gentiles have heard, many of them have believed, and have placed the Jewish Messiah at the very summit of humanity—and the nations that have received Him, at the head of the world. Some stumble over the very steps to heaven.

IV. Paul's two years in Rome. Vs. 30, 31. The reason why Paul remained so long in Rome probably was that the forms of Roman legal proceedings required much time, and the papers in Paul's case may have been lost in the shipwreck. But Paul's time was well occupied. He preached the Gospel and wrote four of his epistles there—the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon. He had many trials and many comforts. But the true worker continued his work, and its results still increase, and Paul by his epistles speaks to more people than ever.

Questions of the Day

Remedy for Sabbath Desecration.

By BISHOP JOHN CHARLES RYLE, D.D.
(EPISCOPAL), LIVERPOOL, ENGLAND.

No. VIII.

The surest practical way of resisting the attack made on the Sabbath in the present day is to supply the working classes with plain instruction on the subject, and to open their eyes to all its bearings. I make no apology for urging my readers, and especially my brethren in the minis-

try, to do this continually. Tell the working classes never to be taken in and deluded by those who want the sanctity of the Lord's Day to be more publicly invaded than it is, and yet say they are "their friends!" However well-meaning and fair-spoken such persons may be, they are not real friends. They are in reality **THEIR WORST ENEMIES**. They are taking the surest course to add to their burdens. They do not mean it, very likely, but in reality they are doing them a cruel injury.

Tell the working classes that if the Lord's Day is ever turned into a day of play and amusement, it will soon become a day of labor and work. It is vain to suppose that it can be avoided. It never has been in other countries. It never would be in our own land. Once establish the principle that picture galleries and aquariums, and museums, and crystal palaces are to be thrown open on Sundays, and you let in the thin end of the wedge. The enemy would have got inside the walls. The sacredness of the day of rest would be entirely gone. Shops would soon be opened. Farmers would insist on cultivating the land, or getting in hay or corn on Sundays. Factories would go on working. Contractors would press forward their operations.

Tell the working classes that if they ever lose their old Holy Sabbath, they will soon find that they have lost their best friend. Tell them that those who want to secure them a little more time for rest and relaxation should not try to take that time out of Sunday. Let them take a little piece out of one of the six working days, if possible, but not a bit out of the day of God. Tell them that as the world has got six days for its business, and God has only left Himself one for His, it is only fair and right that the world should give up some of its time, before we begin robbing God of His.

After all, there is a world to come, a life after death, an eternity either in heaven or hell. We must all die at last, and stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, when we rise again. Never, never let us cease to maintain and proclaim these great realities, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Never let us forget that the value we put on the Lord's Day, and the manner in which we spend it, are some of the most useful and searching tests of our fitness to die, and our readiness for heaven.

Alas for the prospects of those who know nothing of keeping Sabbaths holy on earth, and who only spend them in worldliness, pleasure-taking, or sin! I tremble to think of this. If a man will not meet God one day in seven upon earth, where is his readiness for an eternity in His company and

the society of saints and angels? Where is his meetness for heaven, which is nothing but an eternal Sabbath, an everlasting Sunday, a Lord's Day without end? Yes, I may well ask, Where? Men, forsooth, cannot give God one single day in seven! It wearies them to spend one-seventh part of their time in attempting to know anything about Him before whose bar they are going one day to stand! His Bible wearies them! His ministers weary them! His house wearies them! His praises weary them! The excursion train is better! The newspaper is better! The merry dinner party is better! Anything, in short, anything is better than God! Alas, what an awful state this is to be in! But, alas, how common!

But blessed and happy is the thought that delight in the observance of the Lord's Day on earth is one of the surest evidences of "meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light." Those who have loved to meet Christ by faith in His Sunday worship on earth are precisely those who will meet Him with joy at His second appearing. Nor shall we meet Him alone. We shall meet many with whom we have prayed and praised upon earth, in the Sabbath which will never end. The best and most successful religious meetings we hold in this world have their sorrows as well as their joys. We annually miss some who, though not lost, are gone before, and are tempted to say, as we see the gaps,

"Oh, for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!"

But, thank God, we shall see them all again. Bishop Wilson, and Hambleton, and Mackenzie, and McNeil, and Stowell, and Marsh, and Haldane Steward, and Bickersteth, and Henry Venn, and Villiers, and Baring, and Champneys, and Conway, are all, I believe, safe in the arms of Jesus. What a Sabbath that will be when we shall all meet again! But till that day comes let us contend earnestly for the observance of our old Holy Sabbath—the Lord's Day. The great day of the Lord will make amends for all the hard work we do, and all the hard speeches we bear in defending the Lord's Day on earth. So let us close our ranks, stand firm, and fight on. "The night is far spent, and the day is at hand."

Helpful Hints for Workers

Be in Earnest.

By REV. E. BAILEY (INDEPENDENT),
ENGLAND.

He who has called you into His Church has appointed a work for you to do, and He requires you to do it earnestly, with all your might. He says, "Go and work for Me. Go and seek the wandering and the outcast. Go and feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and instruct the ignorant in all useful knowledge, but especially in the knowledge of Me."

Multitudes are living without religion. Satan is triumphing in his success; the world is captivating its thousands; men are dying; sinners are perishing; and hell is being peopled with lost souls. Go and seek to draw them off from the unfruitful works of darkness. Go and tell them "Time is short, and eternity is advancing." Tell them of their danger; of the love of God to them as a Father; of Jesus as a Saviour, who is able and willing to save them. Tell them to repent of their sins, to put away the evil of their doings, to fly to the outstretched arms of mercy, to believe in Jesus, and they shall be saved.

Tell them till your own heart melts into tenderness, and they feel that you mean what you say. How much need is there in all Christian hearts of a longing, yearning, earnest desire to do good. How few feel the burden of the Lord, and travail in birth for souls as they should. The holiest and the best among men are but half awake. If all Christians were but truly in earnest, how many sinners might be won to the Saviour who are now walking in darkness.

But with death in view, eternity at hand, and sinners dying, we find it hard to be in earnest; we need the soul-constraining love of Jesus to move us. Without this we are lukewarm, cold, and inconstant in all our efforts to do good. No consideration of the shortness of time and the near approach of eternity will ever move us to action,

unless the love of Jesus be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. This we must have if we would earnestly do the work of Him who gave Himself for us. "It is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing." Listen to the voice of Jesus, which, as a bell in the high tower of His Church, is ever ringing through the earth, "Behold, I come quickly, and My reward is with Me to give to every man according as his work shall be."

Live near to God, and ever bear in mind that there is a moral influence going out from the life of every man which operates upon the minds of others either for good or evil, the effects of which will remain after he is dead. A look, a word, the tone of voice, an action, may leave an impression upon the mind which, like sound, will vibrate and run on through eternity, and each vibration be a fresh memorial of the original that gave the impulse. The mother influences the mind of her child, and that influence will by him be made to operate on the minds of others yet unborn. The master influences the mind of his apprentice; the friend influences the mind of his companion. Every one is influencing the mind of some one else.

Such a view of life makes it a serious thing to live, and shows how needful it is that every Christian should live near to God, cultivate the garden of his own soul, keep his own vineyard well, that he may be able to influence other minds for good. Jesus said to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world;" "Ye are the salt of the earth." The highest and noblest end of man is to be conformed to Jesus in thought, in word, and in deed, and like Him, to be ever going about doing good.

The exhibition of exalted piety in the professors of religion has a power which nothing can withstand. It is truth embodied. It is the power of the Gospel burning in the heart, beaming in the eye, bursting from the lips, and preaching in

the life. It speaks to all, and shows the power of the constraining love of Jesus in tones of tenderness, benevolence, and zeal. Did all Christians live near to God, in habitual intercourse with Him, how would they feel for souls, pray for their salvation, and speak to them out of the fulness of a loving heart! God would then use them for His glory. His blessing would follow their efforts and holy example, quickening

into spiritual life the seeds sown by them, and causing the fragrant myrtle and the fir-trees to bless the place where thorns, thistles, and briars once grew. Then men would see the reality of religion, and be persuaded that believers have a source of joy that the world knows not of.

"So let our lips and lives express
The holy Gospel we profess,
Then shall we best proclaim abroad
The honors of our Saviour God."

THE PULPIT TREASURY IN THE FAMILY.

The Sacredness of Home.

By J. E. TWITCHELL, D.D. (CONGREGATIONAL), BOSTON.

When Napoleon I. affirmed that what France needed was "good mothers," he uttered a truth which must have been a severe rebuke. The trouble was, not that the mothers of France did not love their children, but that they neglected home; gave their children over to nurses, preceptresses and tutors. French households have never had sacred and secluded spots, pervaded with the influence of father, mother, child. Amusements and diversions are seldom found in French families. All French life is proverbially public. Pleasures are sought on the streets, in the café, in gardens, parks and halls where the crowds collect. All discipline and culture there is external. Frenchmen never think of asking how they can make their homes sunny and happy, but where they can go for enjoyment. In the sad ritualism of their religion the family is not found together. Households seem to have no true idea of the relation of their members to each other. The French, indeed, have no word in "all their voluminous and versatile tongue" which corresponds with our word "home." Their salutation, translated into English, is, "How do you carry yourself?" showing that their thought is of people on the go. This was the condition of things which made possible the "Massacre of St. Bartholomew" and the "Reign of Terror," and the countless revolutions of the ages; thus delaying the "liberty which Lafayette long sought," and which so often has seemed ready to be realized.

What France needs is homes, with holy influences pervading them. Never will the French rise into permanent Republicanism until there is a radical reconstruction of their home life. Our institutions are not secure, unless our homes become more sacred. Side by side in the home, parents and children must sit in companionship; side by side too in concert-halls and churches. Any pleasure, any worship tending to scatter the family, should be looked upon with suspicion. The father has no right to go where he would not take his boy; the mother, where she would not take her girl. Parents should never have companions or associations, or mingle in scenes of which they would be ashamed to have their children fully informed. To have a home, there must be confidential living together, apart from all others. An Englishman's house is said to be his "castle." Any invasion of that is punished with greater severity than trespass on public property, for the reason that it is an invasion of the home. Burglary everywhere is a greater crime than robbery. "Common law" sprang from the right idea. It is strange that this idea has so lost its hold on men. Whatever is worthy of the name of "wealth" our homes inshrine.

To grown men and women, it need not be said that the impressions of childhood are most vital and forceful. The breath of nursery songs is wafted over all the years. The progress of childhood pulsates far down on age. The love which was kindled in hearts under the old homeroof, and the aspirations born there, are the propelling powers of life.

Whether willing it or not, whether con-

scious of it or not, we build on the foundations laid in youth. The superstructure may be so modified as to seem a new creation, but the atmosphere of childhood follows us, envelops us, never fails us.

See in these facts the wide range and riches of home. See, also, where we are to look for our purest pleasures and our divinest helps, where we are to expect all permanent reformations to begin, and be energized; where righteous living is to be illustrated and the Church enthroned.

Out of our home we who are parents go, with cheer and hope to take strong and steady hold of life, or to stagger on, dispirited, the prey of passion and the pursued of evil. Out of our homes, too, the children go, girt about with golden memories, clad in armor to resist the attacks of evil, ready for sublime endeavor and achievement; or, unsheltered, the sport of every alluring sin, to sigh and sink amid the waves of woe around. All day long we carry with us in our hearts and lives what the home gives us in the morning. Every evening when we come back from toil, we bring with us what our anticipations are that the home will be.

There are houses only two stories high, with four plain, unpapered walls, in anything but desirable localities. "But there is a man who would die on the threshold rather than surrender it. Why? It is home.

When he thinks of it, he sees angels encamping round it. Ladders are let down from heaven to every pillow in that house. Over the baby's crib chantings come, as sweet as those which broke over Bethlehem when Christ was born." The children there are growing up to manhood and womanhood. They may dwell in mansions by and by; but they shall never forget that lowly place, where father rested, where mother sang, and brother and sister played.

"If you would gather up all tender memories, all lights and shadows, all banquetings and reunions, all filial, fraternal and conjugal affections; and had only four letters with which to spell out the length and breadth, the height and depth, the magnitude and eternity of the meaning of all, you could write it out in these four letters: H-O-M-E."

Would that I might help you see and realize the riches at your disposal in the home. Some of my readers are just beginning to build their home. Be exhorted to build wisely, with large thought of the sacredness of home life. Some have long had homes, and are supremely happy in them. God bless you all, brightening these homes of yours, and making them to blossom in a joy so sweet that heaven shall be begun for you on earth.

✠ LIGHT FROM THE ORIENT ON BIBLE TEXTS ✠

The Tribes of Gilead: Their Character and Influence.

BY PRES. J. L. PORTER, D.D., LL.D.
(PRESBYTERIAN), QUEEN'S COLLEGE,
BELFAST, IRELAND.

When the Israelites were marching toward Palestine across the plateau of Moab, the sacred writer tells us that "The children of Reuben and the children of Gad had a very great multitude of cattle: and when they saw the land of Jazer, and land of Gilead, that the place was a place for cattle," they said to Moses, "Let this

land be given unto thy servants for a possession" (Num. xxxii., 1-5). Their request was granted; and that act changed the current of their whole after history. In their chosen territory they were brought into contact with a number of nomad and semi-nomad tribes, whose pursuits, language, and dress they soon adopted. The Gileadites were shepherds—forced to be so by soil and climate; forced also to migrate from pasture to pasture, and from fountain to fountain—for the long summer drought blights the pastures and dries up the streams. The Israelites had been

inured to the same mode of life in the wilderness, and the trans-Jordanic settlers permanently adopted it. Hence we do not find in after days among them the same intense attachment to home and country as was manifested by their brethren west of the Jordan. They had no capital—no national city or shrine around which their patriotic feelings centred. They were, in fact, chiefly nomads, occupied with the care of their cattle, and never entirely emerged from the state of their patriarchal ancestors. Theirs was the pasture-land of Palestine. The picturesque hills of Gilead and broad plains of Bashan were clothed with rich grass, and over them roamed herds of wild cattle, “fat bulls of Bashan”—flocks too of every kind, “rams and lambs and goats, all of them fatlings of Bashan” (Ezek. xxxix., 18).

The ancient heathen tribes were rude in speech and accent, lawless in character, cruel in war, and debased in morals and religion. So also the Israelites soon became. Rapine and war and bloodshed, one might almost say, were their normal employments. We read of their wars with the Hagerites; their skill in the use of sword and bow; the spoils in cattle, camels, and flocks which they seized; the gross idolatry into which they fell; the multitudes whom they slew (I. Chron. v.). We read of their “mighty men” who joined the outlaw David, “whose faces were like the faces of lions, who were swift as the roes upon the mountains” (xii. 3-15). Jephthah was a true son of that wild country—rash, reckless, brave—outraging natural affection in order to keep a superstitious vow. But the nomad tribes had one redeeming quality—hospitality to strangers; and so Gilead became emphatically the land of exile, the refuge of all refugees. There the unfortunate Ishbosheth found an asylum after the death of Saul. There Absalom, when he slew his brother, was protected by his mother’s kinsfolk. Thither David fled during the rebellion of Absalom. And there our Lord sought a place of repose after the relentless persecution of the Jews before the agonies of the passion week. In the forty-second psalm we have a beautiful delineation of

the feelings of an exile in this land of safety and sorrow.

It is worthy of note that the people on the east side of the Jordan had a marked peculiarity of accent, and a mode of pronouncing certain words and letters which betrayed their nationality. The tribes of Reuben, Gad and Manasse very soon took up this accent, so that it became natural to them: and as early as the days of Jephthah they were easily distinguished from their western brethren by their Shibboleth (Judges xii., 5, 6). Strange to say, the peculiarity has been perpetuated, and at this day the accent of the people is as different on the two sides of the Jordan as it is on the two sides of the Scottish border. I could select a dozen words in common use, each of which would now form a Shibboleth.

The dress, too, of the Eastern nomad has in every age been different from that of the western peasant—a flowing robe of camel’s hair, a leathern girdle, a party-colored handkerchief on the head encircled by a twisted fillet. Add to these, long raven locks, bare feet and arms, piercing black eyes, erect figure, and one has before him the Arab as pictured on the monuments of Egypt four thousand years ago, or seen this day on his native desert. And such was Elijah, the prophet of Gilead (I. Kings xvi., 1), as he appeared to the messengers of Ahaziah—shaggy hair, a rough camel’s hair mantle girt by a leathern girdle round his naked body, fleet of foot, so that he could outrun the chariot of Ahab; a genuine Bedawy in fact (II. Kings i., 8; ii., 8). Such too, was John the Baptist, a native of the wilderness of Judea, where the eastern nomads fed their flocks—“clothed with camel’s hair, with a girdle of skin about his loins” (Mark i., 6).

The lawlessness and barbarity of the heathen tribes were also imitated by the Israelites in their trans-Jordanic wars. Witness the massacres of Jabesh (Judges xxi., 6), of the fords of the Jordan (xii. 6.), of Succoth and Penuel (viii., 7, 16, 17), and the still more horrible atrocities of Rabboth-Ammon and Kir-Moab (II. Sam. xii., 31; II. Kings iii., 25).

The Maachathites. On the rugged sides and in the ravines of Hermon dwelt the

Maachathites, an ancient tribe whom the Israelites could not expel (Deut. iii., 14; Joshua, xii., 5; xiii., 11-13). They were allied to the Arameans (Syrians) of Damascus (I. Chron. xix., 6, 7), and they joined the Ammonites against king David (II. Sam. x., 6). David, however, subdued them; and then, with his usual tact, embodied some of their bravest men in his army. (II. Sam. xxiii., 34).

The Geshurites were likewise an ancient tribe, related to the Maachathites, and occupying an adjoining territory. Their home was Argob—a rocky wilderness, intersected by ravines, forming a great natural stronghold (Deut. iii., 14; Joshua xiii., 11). The Israelites, unable to expel

them, formed an alliance with them, so as to protect an exposed and distant frontier. King David cemented the alliance by marrying a daughter of Talmi their king. Absalom was the fruit of the marriage (II. Sam. iii., 3); and the wild traits of his character, and the unnatural rebellion he raised against his father, were doubtless the effects of maternal training, and of the counsels of his uncle, the king of Geshur, while a refugee in his kingdom (II. Sam. xiii., 15). It is a singular fact that the modern inhabitants of Argob are as wild and lawless as the ancient Geshurites. Character, like almost everything else, remains unchanged among the people of the East.

— PRAYER MEETING SERVICE —

The Prayers.

By REV. SMITH BAKER (BAPTIST).

Prayer-meetings are for prayer—for united prayer. This is their primary object. They are founded upon the promise: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," etc. Praying together not only pleases God and is stronger than private prayer, but praying together quickens each private heart. Prayer excites to prayer, and we not only go from our closets better fitted for the prayer-meeting, but we go from a warm prayer-meeting better fitted for our closets. Social and private devotions help each other. A large portion of the time in a social meeting should be given to prayer—not to long prayers but to a long season of short prayers. We are not heard for our much speaking, and the goodness and power of a prayer is not in its length. Good men are sometimes unconscious how long they pray, which is right enough in the closet, but not right in the social meeting. In private we may remain all day, all night, upon our knees, but in public we are to remember others whose voices and minds and hearts are seeking to join with us. Sometimes men seem to be trying to pray themselves into the spirit and by so doing pray others out of it, and we feel like the young girl

who, after a long-winded prayer, commenced to sing: "Hallelujah, 'tis done!"

In social prayer the introduction and conclusion should be omitted and all circumlocution avoided. Ask directly for what is resting most heavily upon the heart. A prayer should be born, not made. A fine prayer, an elegant prayer, a learned prayer, is an abomination. Leave out glittering generalities. Do not try to pray for everything in one prayer. Do not pray as though the Lord was ignorant, but as though He was willing. Avoid vain, that is continued, repetitions. Do not seek to be original, but be natural. Use simple words—the more child-like the better. Have one particular thing at one time to ask for, and ask it with all your heart. Try to feel as though no one was hearing you but God, and remember at the same time that you are praying for others. The opening prayer should be an invocation for the Spirit's power upon the songs, the exhortations, and the prayers which may follow, brief, tender, trusting.

Sometimes it is best to have a season of three, four, five, six or more, short prayers. They warm up a meeting. Five prayers of two minutes each are better than one prayer of ten minutes, because it is the coming to God of five hearts from five

different experiences, and enables more of the congregation to enter into sympathy with the worship. Let there be a union of desire in these prayers, a uniting of the flames upon one point. Whatever the subject of the meeting is, *that* pray for, *all* pray for it.

Prayers should be spontaneous, voluntary, an outburst of the spirit of prayer; but sometimes it is well to call brethren out, in particular the weak and timid, and young converts. They need the *lift* of an invitation, and after they have been drawn out a few times they will have the courage to volunteer, for the freedom and facility of prayer grow by exercise. Help men to cultivate their gifts.

It gives interest, tenderness, and earnestness also, to have special request for particular persons or objects. Let there be perfect freedom, not only for persons to request prayers for themselves, but to send in requests for those they love and concerning whom they feel an earnest desire. It is a church prayer-meeting and the church, its pastor, its preaching and its

Sunday-school should be remembered—and at each such meeting there should be at least one prayer offered for the absent, the aged, the sick and the afflicted, that all the church may feel they are remembered at a common throne of grace. Such a practice binds the absent to the present and deepens the bond of sympathy between them.

And, above all, *the lost* should be prayed for. A church supplicating for the salvation of sinners will be a converting church. Let all pray, not all lead in prayer, for not every one has the gift, but all unite with the leader in the silent supplication of their hearts; for social prayer should not be one person praying, but all praying through the voice of one. It is a good plan frequently to have a season of silent prayer, for God hears our thoughts. Be sure, most of all, that the spirit of prayer is in every heart, not only when some one is leading in spoken supplication, but when the songs are sung and the exhortations are made, for the atmosphere of prayer is what gives a meeting power.

— Mission Fields —

Prayer-meetings on Missionary Ground.

BY REV. R. CHAMBERS, ERZROOM,
TURKEY.

In response to a circular from the Central Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association, Geneva, we observed the Week of Prayer for Young Men Nov. 9th to 15th. The interest developed during those evenings of communion with our God and Saviour culminated in the formation of an Erzroom Young Men's Christian Association and the appointing of two weekly prayer-meetings in addition to the regular Wednesday evening meeting hitherto observed. These meetings are well attended—~~average~~ from eighty to one hundred—and are always interesting, sometimes intensely so. Let me share with you, dear reader, some of the good things upon which our hearts have been feasting lately in these meetings.

Enter then with me a room capable of

seating nearly one hundred persons. There is no furniture in the room except carpets and mats covering the earthen floor and a table and stool for the conductor of the service. But it is not easy to enter, for though we are on time the room is already so crowded that we reach the desk and stool grateful to think that we have really avoided stepping on anybody. After making a joyful noise unto the Lord (you being accustomed to organs and trained choirs would scarcely call it *singing*) a chapter is read and a prayer offered. Then a young man, having lately spent some months in Constantinople, rises to tell of temptations there to be met with, and of the one weapon—God's Word—which, even in a weak hand, is all-sufficient to overcome them. This young man's few words bring to his feet a tall, angular figure stooped with hard work and headlongness, clothed in the costume of the country—roomy shalwars, a tight-

fitting jacket and a capacious girdle. This man says, "It is eighteen years since I was 'revealed' (openly confessed evangelicalism). Previous to that time I was a prodigal of prodigals. I kept a wine-shop. My companions were liars and drunkards. I spent my living riotously and did not provide bread for my wife and children. One night thieves entered a house near by and I, though innocent, was imprisoned on a charge of burglary. My brother offered bail for me saying, 'I know he is bad and I cannot answer for his conduct generally, but I know he is innocent of this crime.' But a man imprisoned with me on the same charge was innocent and I knew it, and so I refused to go out until that man should also be released. I was greatly ashamed. When I left prison I said in my heart, 'O God, it is enough. If Thou art rebuking me for my good let it so be.' So I cast away my glasses and bottles together with their contents, closed my wine-shop and turned from the accursed thing for ever. And God has been good to me since, has prospered and blessed me. Pray that I faint not, nor fail to acknowledge His goodness."

The leader would have suggested the hymn, "I was a wandering sheep," but a short, full-faced, somewhat nervous man has the floor: "I am about forty years of age. When a boy of seven, missionaries were rare and prayer-meetings as rare. My father heard that a missionary had come to Erzroom and so he took me with him one day to hear what the man had to say. As we neared the missionary's house, that house near the Italian consul's, a stone came pat upon my arm. I winced and cried out (suited the action to the word). I didn't think it pleasant going there, but my father took me. He had me by the hand and I couldn't get away. The preacher was a fat, stout man—I think it was Mr. Peabody—and he talked loud and bravely. I don't remember anything he said, but the circumstance is imprinted on my mind. Friends persecuted my father for going and he never went again. For fifteen years after that I gave the matter no thought until one day I was passing in the street when I saw brother Hampartsumu—there he sits in your midst now—

sitting on his door step reading a book. I knew it was the Bible and my heart smote me, but I passed on and said nothing. Another day I passed a shop where I saw a stranger from Arabkir reading. I asked, 'What are you reading?' He answered, 'The Bible.' I looked at it and said, 'How much does it cost?' When he said thirty-two piasters (about one hundred and forty cents) I nearly went crazy. 'Will you sell it to me at that price?' 'Yes.' So I bought it and read it too. After a time I heard that the Protestant young men had a prayer-meeting, so I started out lantern in hand, for it was a dark night, but failing to find the place I returned home. Another night I sallied out and this time found the room in which they were praying. A young man stood up to pray—he is present here to-night—and his prayer broke my heart. My acceptance and profession of Christ were due to that young man's prayer. There in the markets I began to witness for Christ. My heart was full and I was burning with zeal. One time a man with a knife concealed under his coat came in where I was talking and intended to kill me, but the Lord restrained him and I left the place in safety. Young men, be strong; God's promises fail not. The other Sunday, after Sunday-school, I was reading Christ's command, 'Go ye into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that My house may be full,' and I thought, 'What am I doing?' So I cast aside honor and dignity and took my stand in front of the chapel on the street there and I arrested each passer-by, Turk and Christian, saying, 'Come into the chapel and hear what our preacher has to say.' And I thus brought in thirty-six men until there was not standing room left. Let us work and God will bless us."

Other prayers and recitals follow, but we must stop them for it is getting late.

"Did you notice an air of weariness on any countenance in that meeting?" "No. The eager attention of all and the play of feeling on many countenances were refreshing to behold." "The more refreshing when you remember that this is the fifth service in which nearly all these people have joined to-day and it is now past their usual bed-time."

"I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go in to the house of the Lord.'"

BEAUTIFUL THOUGHTS

Wounds given to honor never heal.—*Corneille*.

One of the sublimest things in this world is plain truth.—*Bulwer*.

If you cannot be great, be willing to serve God in things that are small.—*S. F. Smith*.

Tears are the safety-valve of the heart when too much pressure is laid on.—*Albert Smith*.

Gratitude to a covenant God makes even a temporal blessing a taste of heaven.—*Romaine*.

Sunday—a day dear to all who do anything like their duty in the week.—*Mary Marston*.

Let all seen enjoyments lead to the unseen fountain from whence they flow.—*Halyburton*.

True piety is the light of a dwelling, the source of the most lasting comfort and happiness.—*Jacobus*.

I find the doing of the will of God leaves me no time for disputing about His plans.—*George Macdonald*.

The Sabbath is the link between the Paradise which has passed away and the Paradise which is yet to come.—*Wylie*.

There is a joy for those who love.

A song to break the gloom of night;

A crown for all who look above—

Who trust alone in Jesus' might.

The golden beams of truth and silver cords of love, twisted together, will draw men on with a sweet violence, whether they will or no.—*Cudworth*.

I desire not to go on the lee side or sunny side of religion—to put truth betwixt me and the storm; my Saviour did not so for me, who, in His suffering, took the windy side of the hill.—*Rutherford*.

It is good for us to think no grace or blessing truly ours till we are aware that God has blessed some one else with it through us.—*Rev. Phillips Brooks*.

Faith, though weak, is still faith; a glimmering taper, if not a glowing torch; but the taper may give light as truly as the torch, though not so brightly.—*H. Muller*.

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,

Whom we, that have not seen Thy face,

By faith, and faith alone embrace.

Believing where we cannot prove."

—*Tennyson*.

The wish falls often warm upon my heart that I may learn nothing here that I cannot continue in the other world; that I may do nothing here but deeds that will bear fruit in heaven.—*Richter*.

There is a threefold submission to God—first, of our carnal hearts to His holiness; secondly, of our proud hearts to His mercy; thirdly, of our revolting hearts to His sovereignty.—*Dr. Manton*.

When Christ gives peace, He does not hinder, but guides thought; does not destroy, but purifies love; does not stop industry, but sweetens toil; does not check, but makes business just and good.—*Ex*.

No grace is more necessary to the Christian worker than fidelity; the humble grace that marches on in sunshine and storm, when no banners are waving, and there is no music to cheer the weary feet.—*S. J. Nicholls*.

Heaven is the day of which grace is the dawn; the rich, ripe fruit of which grace is the lovely flower; the inner shrine of that most glorious temple to which grace forms the approach and outer court.—*Dr. Guthrie*.

Some people, judging from their reluctance to give a word of encouragement to their minister, seem to think it is better for him to die of depression than to run the risk of being inflated by a compliment.—*Dr. J. M. Crowell*.

I love to think that we are here for a little while, with precious opportunities of saving souls, which may hereafter add to our harvest of joy and glory. I never find lack of work to be done in the Lord's vineyard.—*Adelaide Newton*.

Nearness of life to the Saviour will necessarily involve greatness of love to Him. As nearness to the sun increases the temperature of the various planets, so near and intimate communion with Jesus raises the heat of the soul's affections toward Him.—*Spurgeon*.

It is thus that living sacrifices, holy and acceptable, ascend from a human life to God when that life is in Christ. When a human soul is within the well ordered covenant, it is constrained, by the pressure of divine mercy flowing through Christ, to rise in responsive love.—*Dr. Arnot*.

A little Moslem child accounted for her preference for the Christian religion by saying, "I like your Jesus because He loves little girls. Our Mohammed did not love little girls." With unerring instinct she had seized upon at least one of the great differences between the two religions.—*Exchange*.

How different are the sufferings of the sinner and those of the saint! The former are an eclipse of the moon, by which the dark night becomes still blacker and wilder; the latter are a solar eclipse, which cools off the hot day and casts a romantic shade, and wherein the nightingales begin to warble.—*Richter*.

ILLUSTRATIVE SELECTIONS

74. Tried Friendship.—REV. iii., 18.

Col. Bryd, of Virginia, fell into the hands of the Cherokees, and was condemned to death, in the tribe was a chief that had before been his friend. At the approach of the executioners he threw himself upon their intended victim saying, "This man is my friend; before you can get at him you must kill me," which saved him.

75. The Impossible Service.—MATT. vi., 21.

In the ruins of Pompeii there was found a petrified woman, who, instead of flying from the doomed city, had spent her time in gathering up her jewels. She saved neither her life nor her jewels. There are multitudes making the same mistake. In trying to get earth and heaven they lose both. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

76. The Morning Joy.—PS. xxx., 5.

The joy and the shouting will be raised by the discovery of what was actually in existence all the time. I once spent a night on the summit of Mount Righi, and the darkness was so dense that I could not see one rod from my window. But when the morning broke, the polished mirror of Lake Lucerne spread beneath me, and the icy coronets of the Jungfau and the Fenisteraarhorn glittered in the rosy beams. They had been there all through the night waiting for the unfoldings of the day-spring from on high.—*Theo. L. Cuyler, D.D.*

77. The Encamping Angel.—PS. xxxiv., 7.

It was the custom of Arabs to camp round the tent of their chief, each tent of the circle having an opening toward the pacha's, which could thus be seen and safely guarded; and in this manner we were guarded by God's angels. The encampment was permanent, not like an escort for a portion of the way only, nor like a barrack nor fortress, fixed and stationary; wherever we went we took God's protecting angels with us. Protection we required, for the idea of a camp implied being on an enemy's ground. Let us, therefore, not be discouraged, but bless the Lord at all times, for we had mighty friends to aid us.

78. God's Compassion.—HOSEA xi., 8.

When Theodore Parker was a teacher he had among his scholars a little witch of a boy, whom no reproof and no persuasion could induce to keep himself in order.

One day, after his more than usually troublesome conduct, Mr. Parker required the little fellow to stay after school to be whipped. So the time had come for this last resource of the

exhausted patience and skill of the teacher. According to directions, the little fellow held out his hand for punishment, and as he took it; Mr. Parker said he looked down into the little face, and the boy looked so much like his little sister, whose conduct was all right, and who had won Mr. Parker's love—he stayed the rod, and kissed the innocent lips that were ready to break forth into crying, and sent the pupil home.

79. Power of Jesus' Blood.—HEB. ix., 14.

An old warrior, lying at the point of death, said to the missionary who stood at his side, "Oh! I have been in great trouble this morning; but I am happy now. I saw an immense mountain, with precipitous sides, up which I endeavored to climb; but when I had attained a considerable height, I lost my hold, and fell to the bottom. Exhausted with perplexity and fatigue, I went to a distance, and sat down to weep, and, while weeping, I saw a drop of blood fall upon the mountain, and in a moment it was dissolved." "This was certainly a strange sight," remarked the missionary. "What construction did you put upon it?" The dying chieftain seemed astonished at the missionary's question, and replied, "That mountain was my sins, and the drop which fell upon it was one drop of the precious blood of Jesus, by which the mountain of my guilt must be melted away."

80. The Pleasures of Sin.—HEB. xi., 25.

There is a curious tree known as the Judas tree. Long before the leaves appear upon the branches, the gorgeous blossoms ornament them, and they look like scarlet sun-gleams caught amongst the boughs, and held prisoners by their interlacings. The brilliant beauty of the crimson flowers attracts thousands of tiny insects, and the wild bees seek to draw honey from their exquisitely shaped cups. But every insect, bee or butterfly that ventures to rest upon the edge of its blossom is overcome by a fatal, curious sort of opiate, or sleeping-draught, which the flower-juice contains, and drops dead upon the ground beneath! If you were to walk round the tree with me, you would see the soft grass strewn with dead and dying bright-winged insects! The Judas-tree reminds you and me of sin. Sin may look bright, pleasant and attractive to our eyes; we may think it "no harm" to indulge in it. But lurking behind "the pleasures of sin" is a fatal poison. Even a dear little child may be led to taste the deadliness of sin, and its beautiful, pure soul be slain by it! All round the Judas-tree of sin we see the dead and dying souls of men.

A certain benevolent society in Germany aims to place a tray in every café to receive the ends of cigars cut off by smokers before lighting them. The tobacco is sold, and with the proceeds clothing is purchased for poor children at Christmas.

Eight hundred thousand pupils have been taught in the different Methodist schools for the Freedmen during the last year. The receipts of their Freedmen's Aid Society have been \$450,000, invested in permanent school property, and the receipts of the year are \$118,453.

A law went lately into effect in New Jersey which "makes it a misdemeanor for a minor under eighteen years of age to play billiards or pool in public houses of any kind." The proprietor of any such house who allows a minor to play on his premises is liable to a fine of \$20 for each offence.

Mr. George Parker, a missionary of the China Inland Mission, has within a year travelled over three thousand miles in Northern Kansuh, persevering in his work during a severe winter, and selling ten thousand portions of Scripture in Chinese. He met many traders from other provinces of China, and from the interior of Asia.

The Evangelical Churches of America are supporting in the foreign field, according to the latest summary, 2,236 laborers. Exclusive of native helpers, the Presbyterian Church (North) maintains 445 missionaries, the American Board 432, the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) 279, the American Baptist Missionary Union 190, and the Moravian Church 284.

Milwaukee last year produced 1,066,030 barrels of beer, or 86,290 barrels more than the year before. The Milwaukee *Prohibitionist* says: "There is in this city one saloon for twenty-six voters, and as half the people do not drink, every thirteen drunkards must support one saloon. How many women take in washing to support the thirteen drunkards who support each saloon?"

The American Board of Missions through its 429 missionaries and its 504 native pastors and catechists is preaching the Gospel in twenty-five different languages and dialects in more than 800 towns and cities every Lord's Day. Its colleges and high schools have more than 4,000 young men and women under training, while more than 30,000 children are being taught in its common schools, where direct Christian instruction is constantly given. The report for the year past, specially in reference to the work in Japan and Turkey, is most encouraging.

The statistics published by the government of England show that in that country they expend for intoxicants nearly three times as much as for bread; nearly four times as much as for butter and cheese; four and a half times as much as for milk; five times as much as for sugar; and nearly seven times the cost of all their tea, coffee and cocoa. Twice as much is paid for strong drinks as is paid for all their linen, cotton and woolen clothing. Then, for keeping the local peace, and for paying the direct costs of all this, an additional \$500,000,000 is expended, making a total loss directly chargeable to this invasion of one thousand million gold dollars a year. As soon as the pending extension of the franchise is adopted, two millions of the sufferers by this alcoholic invasion will be heard from at the polls.

Probably the Christian public has little appreciation of the magnitude of the regenerating work done in Utah by means of Christian schools. From statistics carefully prepared it appears that 71 school buildings have been erected at a cost of \$297,000, and more than a dozen other schools are held in rented buildings. In all, 85 schools are sustained with funds from outside the Territory, in which are employed 185 teachers, whose salaries amount to \$98,000 a year, and nearly 7,500 children are taught. The value of public school property is \$408,700, or greater by only 38 per cent. The amount paid in salaries to the teachers of the public schools is \$120,000. So that the East contributes only \$22,000 less to education in Utah than is raised in the Territory from taxes and tuition. And still more striking is the fact that *not less than one-fourth* of the average attendance is found in the Christian schools.

According to the statistics of the liquor men themselves, there were consumed in the United States during the fiscal year ending June 30th, 1884, the enormous aggregate of 79,616,601 gallons of distilled liquors and 18,995,616 barrels of fermented liquors. Allowing that 5,000,000 gallons of the spirituous liquors were used for medical and mechanical purposes (there were but 4,269,978 gallons thus used the year before) and we have left 74,616,601 gallons of spirituous liquors used for drinking purposes, and, of course, the entire amount of fermented liquors. Reducing this to saloon-keepers' estimate, one-half a gill of distilled and one-third of a pint of fermented liquors per drink, and placing the cost to the drinker at 10 cents per glass for the former and 5 cts. for the latter, and we have \$478,546,246.40 spent for spirituous, and \$636,252,798.53 for malt liquors the last year, making a total of \$1,114,799,044.93 as the nation's drink bill for a single year.

BOOK DEPARTMENT, Etc.

HUMPHRY SANDWICH: A Memoir Compiled from Autobiographical Notes by his Nephew, Thomas Humphry Ward. Cassell & Company, Limited: London, Paris and New York.

These two hundred and sixty pages are filled with sketches of the life of the subject of this book. They are intensely interesting, give much information about Eastern nations which he visited, and record incidents respecting the stirring scenes of several European wars in which he intermingled, seeking by voice, pen and sword to bring some relief to the Christian populations in European Turkey. Dr. Sandwich seems to have had the head of a man and the heart of a woman as he battled everywhere against tyranny, barbarism and wrong.

REVELATION UNIVERSAL AND SPECIAL. By Rev. William W. Olssen, S.T.D., Professor of Greek and Hebrew, St. Stephen's College, New York. New York: Thomas Whittaker, 2 and 3 Bible House. Price, \$1.25.

This treatise deals with fundamental principles in revelation. It is a sober, thoughtful, carefully conducted argument to show that intuition is at the basis of revelation and that from that basis it progresses in fulness and clearness by various methods which God has adopted to make known his will to man. On this line the subject is clearly conceived, lucidly expressed and the book forms a valuable addition to works on Christian apologetics.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF JAMES HENLEY THORNWELL, D.D., LL.D., Ex-President of the South Carolina College, Late Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary at Columbia, South Carolina. By B. M. Palmer, D.D., LL.D., Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, New Orleans, Louisiana. Richmond, Whittet & Shepperson.

This is a model biography of a wonderfully talented man and of a distinguished professor, preacher and patriot. Few men in the Church or in the State exercised a wider or greater influence than Dr. Thornwell from his earliest manhood till the close of his life. He left an impress which time will not easily efface upon the people wherever he preached, taught or wrote. He was a stalwart defender of "the faith once delivered to the saints," and of the sole spiritual mission of the Church. But however superior Dr. Thornwell may have been to the common run of men, Dr. Palmer has been fully equal to the task of giving, in this noble volume of over six hundred pages, a full, eloquent and intensely interesting biography of his friend and brother, "one so brave,

so generous, so true, that admiration for his genius was lost in affection for the man." The book cannot be too widely circulated.

HELPFUL LITERATURE IN OUR EXCHANGES.

[Space will permit us to only name the articles in the various magazines on our table which will be of special interest to our readers.]

CASSELL'S FAMILY MAGAZINE, MARCH, 1885. Life at an American College, *Walter Squires*. The Humors of the Sun, *C. R. Woods*. How to Treat Emotional Nervousness, *A Family Doctor*.

CANADIAN METHODIST MAGAZINE, MARCH, 1885. Worry, *Daniel Clark, M.D.* Some Salient Points of American Methodism, *Rev. W. S. Blackstock, II.* Matthew Richey, *D.D.* John Lathern, *D.D.*

LIPPINCOTT'S MAGAZINE, MARCH, 1885. Letters from Sonora, *John Heard, Jr.* The New Orleans Exposition, *Edward C. Bruce*. Babylonian Exploration, *John P. Peters*. Sicilian Proverbs, *F. F. Crane*.

THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW, MARCH, 1885. Future Retribution, *Archdeacon F. W. Farrar*. The Moral Aspects of Vivisection, *Prof. Noah K. Davis*. Buddhist Charity, *Prof. F. Max Muller*. Mind in Men and Animals, *George John Romanes*.

THE MISSIONARY REVIEW, MARCH-APRIL, 1885. British Contributions to Foreign Missions in 1883. Work Among the Old Armenians, *II.* Letters—Bible Work in Bolivia, South America, *III.* The Jewish Movement in Bessarabia, *IV.* An Open Letter, *VIII.*

THE POPULAR SCIENCE MONTHLY, MARCH, 1885. The Darwinian Theory of Instinct, *G. J. Romanes, F.R.S.* Cholera, *II.* Modes of Propagation, *Dr. Max Von Pettenkofer*. A Project in Industrial Education, *Franklin H. North*. The Parental Foresight of Insects.

MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN HISTORY, ILLUSTRATED. Edited by Mrs. Martha J. Lamb. March, 1885. The Fairfaxes of Yorkshire and Virginia, *Richard Wheatley, D.D.* Brigadier-General Nathaniel Lyon, U.S.A., *William A. Hammond, M.D.* The Adventure of Monsieur De Belle-Isle, *Charles Dimitry*. The Story of Astoria, *P. Kich*.

THE CENTURY ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY MAGAZINE, FEBRUARY, 1885. A Florentine Mosaic, *I.* *W. H. Howells*. Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Edmund C. Stedman*. Royalty on the Mississippi, *Mark Twain*. The Battle of Shiloh, *U. S. Grant*. Andrew Sidney Johnston and the Shiloh Campaign, *W. P. Johnston*. Memoranda of the Civil War, *F. J. Porter, R. E. Patterson, W. Todd*.